

THEODOSIUS:

O R, T H E

FORCE OF LOVE.

A

TRAGEDY.

B Y

NATHANIEL LEE.

To which is prefixed

The LIFE of the AUTHOR.

Nec minus periculum ex magna fama quam ex mala.

TACIT.

EDINBURGH:

Printed by and for MARTIN & WOTHERSTOON:

M. DCC. LXVIII.



T H E
L I F E
O F

Mr NATHANIEL LEE.

THIS eminent dramatic poet was the son of a clergyman of the church of England, and was educated at Westminster school under Dr Busby. After he left this school, he was sometime at Trinity College, Cambridge; whence returning to London, he went upon the stage as an actor.

Very few particulars are preserved concerning Mr Lee. He died before he was thirty-four years of age, and wrote eleven tragedies, all of which contain the divine enthusiasm of a poet, a noble fire and elevation, and the tender breathings of love, beyond many of his cotemporaries. He seems to have been born to write for the ladies; none ever felt the passion of love more intimately, none ever knew to describe it more gracefully, and no poet ever moved the breasts of his audience with stronger palpitations, than Lee.

It is certain that our author for sometime was deprived of his senses, and was confined in Bedlam; and as Langbaine observes, it is to be regretted that his madness exceeded that divine fury which Ovid mentions, and which usually accompanies the best poets.

Est Deus in nobis, agitante calefcimus illo.

Mad people have often been observed to do very ingenious things. I have seen a ship of straw, finely fabricated by a mad ship-builder; and the most lovely attitudes have been represented by a mad statuary in his cell.

Lee, for aught we know, might have some noble flights of fancy, even in Bedlam; and it is reported of him, that while he was writing one of his scenes by moon-light, a cloud intervening, he cried out in extasy, "Jove snuff the Moon." But as this is only related upon common report, we desire no more credit may be given to it, than its own nature demands.

His Tragedy of Theodosius, or the Force of Love, is the only play of Lee's that at present keeps possession of the stage; an argument, in my opinion, not much in favour of our taste, that so great a genius should be so much neglected.

It is said, that Lee died in the night, in the streets, upon a frolic, and that his father never assisted him in his frequent and pressing necessity, which he was able to do. It appears that tho' Lee was a player, yet, for want of execution, he did not much succeed, though Mr Cibber says, that he read excellently, and that the players used to tell him, unless they could act the part as he read it, they could not hope success, which, it seems, was not the case with Dryden, who could hardly read to be understood. Lee was certainly a man of great genius; when it is consider'd how young he died, he performed miracles; and had he liv'd 'till his fervour cooled, and his judgment strengthened, which might have been the consequence of years, he would have made a greater figure in poetry than some of his contemporaries, who are now placed in a superior rank.

T O H E R
G R A C E

The DUCHESS of RICHMOND.

M A D A M,

THE reputation that this Play received on the stage, some few errors excepted, was more than I could well hope from so censorious an age, from whom I ask but so much necessary praise, as will serve once or twice a year at most, to gain their good company, and just keep me alive.

*There is not now that mankind that was then,
When as the sun and man did seem to strive
(Joint-tenants of the world) who should survive :
When, if a slow-pac'd star had stol'n away
From the observer's marking, he might stay
Two or three hundred years to see't again,
And then make up his observation plain.*

Dr DONN.

For 'tis impossible in our limited time (and I bring his opinion to back my own, who is, without comparison, the best writer of the age) to present our judges a poem half so perfect as we

could make it. I must acknowledge, Madam, with all humility, I ought to have taken more time, and more pains, in this Tragedy, because it is dedicated to your Grace, who, being the best judge, (and therefore can, when you please, make us tremble) yet with exceeding mercy have pardon'd the defects of Theodosius, and given it your entire approbation. My genius, Madam, was your favourite, when the poet was unknown; and openly receiv'd your smiles, before I had the honour to pay your Grace the most submissive gratitude for so illustrious and advantageous a protection. To let the world, too, know, that you do not think it beneath you to be officiously good; even from the extremest heights to discern the lowest creatures, and give them all the noblest influence you can; you brought her Royal Highness just at the exigent time, whose single presence, on the poet's day, is a subsistence for him all the year after. Ah, Madam, if all the short-liv'd happiness that miserable poets can enjoy, consists in commendation only; nay, if the most part are content with popular breath, and even for that are thankful; how shall I express myself to your Grace, who, by a particular goodness, and innate sweetness, merely for the sake of doing well, have thus rais'd me above myself! To have your Grace's favour, is, in a word, to have the applause of the whole court, who are its noblest ornament; magnificent and eternal praise. Something there is in your mien, so much above that we vulgarly call charming, that, to me, it seems adorable, and your presence almost divine, whose dazzling and majestic form is a proper mansion for the most elevated soul. And let me tell the world, nay, sighing, speak it to

D E D I C A T I O N. vii

a barbarous age, (I cannot help calling it so, when I think of Rome and Greece), your extraordinary love for heroic poetry is not the least argument to shew the greatness of your mind, and fulness of perfection. To hear you speak with that infinite sweetness and chearfulness of spirit, that is natural to your Grace, is, methinks, to hear our tutelar angels: 'tis to bemoan the present malicious times, and remember the golden age. But, to behold you too, is to make prophets quite forget their heaven, and bind the poets with eternal rapture.

—Her pure and eloquent blood
Spoke in her cheeks, and so distinctly wrought,
That one might almost say, her body thought.
You, for whose body God made better clay,
Or took souls stuff, such as shall late decay,
Or such as need small change at the last day.

Dr DONN.

Ziphares and Semandra were first your Grace's favourites: and tho' I ought not, Madam, to praise your wit by your judgment of my painting, yet I must say, such characters every dauber cannot draw. It has been observed against me, that I abound in ungovern'd fancy; but, I hope, the world will pardon the sallies of youth: age, despondence, and dulness, come too fast of themselves. I discommend no man for keeping the beaten road; but I am sure the noble hunters, that follow the game, must leap hedges and ditches sometimes, and run at all, or never come in to the fall of the quarry. My comfort is, I cannot be so ridiculous a creature to any man, as I am to myself: for who should know the house so well as the good man at home? who, when his neighbours come to see him, still sets

the best rooms to view ; and, if he be not a wilful ass, keeps the rubbish and lumber in some dark hole, whither nobody comes but himself, to mortify at melancholy hours. But how then, Madam, in this unsuitable condition, how shall I answer the infinite honours and obligations your Grace has laid upon me ? Your Grace, who is the most beautiful idea of Love and Glory ; who, to that divine composition, have the noblest and best natur'd wit in the world. All I can promise, Madam, and be able to perform, is, that your Grace shall never see a play of mine, that shall give offence to modesty and virtue ; and what I humbly offer to the world, shall be of use at least, and, I hope, deserve imitation ; which is, or ought to be, I am sure, the design of all Tragedies and Comedies both ancient and modern. I should presume to promise myself, too, some success in things of this nature if your Grace, (in whom the charms of beauty, wit, and goodness, seem reconcil'd) at a leisure hour, would condescend to correct, with your excellent judgment, the errors of,

M A D A M,

Your GRACE's most humble,

Most obedient,

And devoted servant,

NAT. LEE.

PROLOGUE.

WIT, long oppress'd, and fill'd at last with rage,
 Thus, in a sullen mood, rebukes the age:
 What loads of fame do modern heroes bear,
 For an inglorious, long, and lazy war!
 Who for some skirmish, or a safe retreat,
 (Not to be drugg'd to battle) are call'd great.
 But, oh! what do ambitious statesmen gain,
 Who into private chests whole nations drain?
 What sums of gold they hoard, is daily known,
 To all mens cost, and sometimes to their own.
 Your lawyer too, that like an Oies bawls,
 That drowns the market higler in the stalls,
 That seems begot, conceiv'd, and born in brawls,
 Yet thrives: he and his crowd get what they please,
 Swarming all term-time thro' the Strand like bees,
 They buz at Westminster, and lie for fees.
 The Godly too their ways of getting have;
 But none so much as your fanatic knave:
 Wisely the wealthiest livings they refuse;
 Who by the fattest bishopricks would lose;
 Who with short hair, large ears, and small blue band,
 True rogues! their own, not God's elect, command.
 Let pigs then be prophane; but broth's allow'd;
 Possess, and christian caudles, may be good;
 Meet helps, to reinforce a brother's blood:
 Therefore each female saint he doth advise,
 With groans, and hums, and ha's, and gogling eyes,
 To rub him down, and make the spirit rise;
 While with his zeal transported from the ground,
 He mounts, and sanctifies the sisters round.
 On poets only no kind star e'er smil'd:
 Curst fate has damn'd 'em, ev'ry mother's child:
 Therefore he warns his brothers of the stage,
 To write no more for an ungrateful age.
 Think what penurious masters you have serv'd;
 Tasso run mad, and noble Spenser starv'd.
 Turn then, whoe'er thou art, that canst write well,
 Thy ink to gall, and in lampoons excel:
 Forswear all honesty, traduce the great,
 Grow impudent, and rail against the state;
 Bursting with spleen, abroad thy pasquils send,
 And chuse some libel-spreader for thy friend:
 The wit and want of Timon point thy mind,
 And for thy satire's subject chuse mankind.

Dramatis Personæ.

THEODOSIUS,
VARANES,
MARCIAN,
LUCIUS,
ATTICUS, Chief Priest.
LEONTINE,
ARANTHES.
Chorus.

PULCHERIA,
ATHENAIS,
MARINA,
FLAVILLA,
JULIA,
DELIA.

Attendants, Singers.

SCENE, CONSTANTINOPLE.

THEODOSIUS:

O R,

The FORCE of LOVE.

ACT I. SCENE I.

A stately Temple, which represents the Christian religion, as in its first magnificence, being but lately established at Rome and Constantinople. The side scenes shew the horrid tortures with which the Roman tyrants persecuted the Church; and the flat scene, which is the limit of the prospect, discovers an altar richly adorned; before it Constantine, suppos'd, kneels, with commanders about him, gazing at a bloody cross in the air, which being encompassed with many angels, offers itself to view, with those words distinctly written, In hoc signo vinces. Instruments are heard, and many attendants; the ministers at divine service walk busily up and down, till ATTICUS, the chief of all the priests, and successor of St Chrysostom, in rich robes, comes forward with the philosopher LEONTINE, the waiters in ranks bowing all the way before him.

A Chorus heard at a distance.

*Prepare, prepare! the rites begin;
Let none unballow'd enter in!
The temple with new glory shines:
Adorn the altars, wash the shrines,
And purge the place from sin.*

ATTICUS.

O H, Leontine! was ever morn like this,
Since the celestial incarnation dawn'd?
I think no day since that such glory gave
To Christian altars, as this morning brings.

Leon. Great successor of holy Chrysostom,
 Who now triumphs above, a saint of honour,
 Next, in degree, to those bright sons of heaven,
 Who never fell, nor stain'd their orient beams,
 What shall I answer? How shall I approach you,
 Since my conversion, which your breath inspir'd?

Atti. To see this day, the Emp'ror of the East
 Leaves all the pleasures that the earth can yield,
 That Nature can bestow, or Art invent,
 In his life's spring, and bloom of gaudy years.
 To undergo the pennance of a cloister,
 Confin'd to narrow rooms, and gloomy walks,
 Fastings, and exercises of devotion,
 Which from his bed at midnight must awake him;
 Methinks, O Leontine! is something more
 Than yet philosophy could ever reach.

Leon. True, Atticus; you have amaz'd my reason.

Atti. Yet more: To our religion's lasting honour,
 Marina and Flavilla, two young virgins,
 Imperial born, cast in the fairest mould
 That e'er the hands of Beauty form'd for woman;
 The mirrors of our court, where Chastity
 And Innocence might copy spotless lustre,
 To-day, with Theodosius, leave the world.

Leon. Methinks, at such a glorious resignation,
 Th' angelic orders should at once descend,
 In all the paint and drapery of heaven,
 With charming voices, and with lulling strings,
 To give full grace to such triumphant zeal.

Atti. No, Leontine: I fear there is a fault;
 For, when I last confess'd the Emperor,
 Whether disgust, and melancholy blood,
 From restless passions urg'd not this divorce,
 He only answer'd me with sighs and blushes.
 'Tis sure his soul is of the tenderest make,
 Therefore I'll tax him strictly: but, my friend,
 Why should I give his character to you,
 Who, when his father sent him into Persia,
 Were by that mighty monarch then appointed
 To breed him with his son the Prince Varanes?

Leon. And what will raise your admiration is,
That two such different tempers should agree.
You know that Theodosius is compos'd
Of all the softness that should make a woman :
Judgment, almost like fear, foreruns his actions,
And he will poise an injury so long,
As if he had rather pardon than revenge it :
But the young Persian prince, quite opposite,
So fiery fierce, that those who view him nearly,
May see his haughty soul still mounting in his face :
Yet did I study these so diff'rent tempers,
Till I at last had form'd a perfect union,
As if two souls did but inform one body ;
A friendship that may challenge all the world,
And, at the proof, be matchless !

Atti. I long to read
This gallant Prince, who, as you have inform'd me,
Comes from his father's court to see our Emp'ror.

Leon. So he intended, till he came to Athens,
And at my homely board beheld my daughter ;
Where, as Fate order'd, she who never saw
The glories of a court, bred up to books
In closets, like a sybil ; she, I say,
Long since from Persia brought by me to Athens,
Unskill'd in charms but those which Nature gave her,
Wounded this scornful prince : in short, he forc'd me
To wait him thither, with deep protestations,
That moment that bereft him of the sight
Of Athenais, gave him certain death.
But see, my daughter, honour'd with his presence.

Enter VARANES and ATHENAI.

Var. 'Tis strange, O Athenais ! wondrous all !
Wondrous the shrines, and wonderful the altars !
The martyrs, though but drawn in painted flames,
Amaze me with the image of their suff'rings :
Saints canoniz'd, that dar'd with Roman tyrants ;
Hermits that liv'd in caves, and fed with angels ;
By Orosmaes, it is wondrous all !
That bloody cross, in yonder azure sky,

Above the head of kneeling Constantine,
 Inscrib'd about with golden characters,
 THOU SHALT O'ERCOME IN THIS: If it be true,
 I say again, by Heav'n, 'tis wondrous strange.

Athe. O Prince, if thus imagination stirs you,
 A fancy rais'd from figures in dead walls,
 How would the sacred breath of Atticus
 Inspire your breast, purge all your dross away,
 And drive this Athenais from your soul,
 To make a virgin room, whom yet the mould
 Of your rude fancy cannot comprehend!

Var. What says my fair? Drive Athenais from me!
 Start me not into frenzy, lest I rail
 At all religion, and fall out with Heaven:
 And what is she, alas! that should supplant thee:
 Were she the mistress of the world, as fair
 As winter-stars, or summer setting suns,
 And thou set by in Nature's plainest dress,
 With that chaste, modest look, when first I saw thee
 The heirs of a poor philosopher;

[*Recorders ready to flourish.*]

I swear by all I wish, by all I love,
 Glory and thee, I would not lose a thought,
 Nor cast an eye that way, but rush to thee,
 To these lov'd arms, and lose myself for ever.

Athe. Forbear, my Lord.

Var. O cruel Athenais!

Why dost thou put me off, who pine to death?
 And thrust me from thee when I would approach thee?
 Can there be aught in this? Curse then thy birthright,
 Thy glorious titles, and ill-suited greatness,
 Since Athenais scorns thee: take again
 Your ill-tim'd honours: take 'em, take 'em, gods!
 And change me to some humble villager;
 If so at last, for toils at scorching noon,
 In moving meadows, or in reaping fields,
 At night she will but crown me with a smile,
 Or reach the bounty of her hand to bless me.

Athe. When princes speak, their subjects should be
 Silent;

Yet, with humility, I would demand
Wherein appears my scorn, or my aversion?
Have I not for your sake abandon'd home,
Where I had vow'd to spend my calmer days?
But you; perhaps, imagine it but little
For a poor maid to follow you abroad,
Especially the daughter of old Leontine!
Yet I must tell you, Prince ——

Var. I cannot bear

Those frowns: I have offended, but forgive me.
For who, O Athenais, that is tofs'd
With such tempestuous tides of love as I,
Can steer a steady course? Retire, my fair:

[Recorders flourish.]

Hark! the solemnities are now beginning,
And Theodosius comes: Hide, hide thy charms.
If to his clouded eyes such day should break,
The royal youth, who doats to death for love,
I fear would forfeit all his vows to Heav'n,
And fix upon the world, thy world of beauty. *[Exeunt.]*

*Enter THEODOSIUS leading MARINA and FLAVILLA,
(all three dress'd in white), followed by PULCHERIA.*

Theo. Farewell, Pulcheria! and, I pray, no more:
For all thy kind complaints are lost upon me.
Have I not sworn the world and I must part?
Fate has proclaim'd it: therefore weep no more;
Wound not the tenderest part of Theodosius,
My yielding soul, that would expire in calms!
Wound me not with thy tears, and I will tell thee,
Yet, ere I take my last farewell for ever,
The cause of all my sufferings: Oh! my sister,
A bleeding heart, the stings of pointed love,
What constitution, soft as mine, can bear.

Pul. My Lord, my Emperor, my dearest brother,
Why all this while did you conceal it from me?

Theo. Because I was ashamed to own my weakness:
I knew thy sharper wit, and stricter wisdom
Would dart reproofs, which I could not endure.

Draw near, O Atticus, and mark me well ;
 For never yet did my complaining spirit
 Unlade this weighty secret upon him,
 Nor groan a syllable of her oppression.

Att. Concealment was a fault ; but speak at large :
 Make bare the wound, and I will pour in balm.

Theo. 'Tis folly all, and fondness—Oh, remembrance !
 Why dost thou open thus my wound again,
 And from my heart call down those warmer drops
 That make me die with shame ? Hear then, Pulcheria !
 Some few preceding days before I left
 The Persian court, hunting one morning early,
 I lost myself and all the company ;
 Still wand'ring on, as Fortune would direct me,
 I pass'd a rivulet, and lighted in
 The sweetest solitude I ever saw !
 When strait, as if Inchantment had been there,
 Two charming voices drew me, till I came,
 Where divers arbours overlook'd the river.
 Upon the oſſer bank two women sat,
 Who, when their song was ended, talk'd to one,
 Who bathing stood far in the cryſtal ſtream :
 But, oh ! what thought can paint that fair perfection,
 Or give a glimpse of ſuch a naked glory !
 Not ſea-born Venus, in the courts beneath,
 When the green nymphs firſt kiſs'd her coral lips,
 All poliſh'd fair, and waſh'd with orient beauty,
 Could in my dazzling fancy match her brightness.

Att. Think where you are.

Theo. Oh, Sir, you muſt forgive me :
 The chaſte enthuſiaſtic form appears,
 As when I ſaw her ; yet I ſwear, Pulcheria,
 Had cold Diana been a looker on,
 She muſt have prais'd the virtues of the virgin :
 The ſatyrs could not grin ; for ſhe was veil'd :
 Nothing immodeſt ; from her naked boſom
 Down to her knees, the nymph was wrapt in lawn :
 But, oh for me, for me, that was too much !
 Her legs, her arms, her hands, her neck, her breasts,
 So nicely ſhap'd, ſo matchleſs in their luſtre ;

Act I. The FORCE of LOVE. 17

Such all-perfection, that I took whole draughts
Of killing love, and ever since have languish'd
With ling'ring surfeits of her fatal beauty !
Alas, too fatal, sure ! Oh, Atticus !
Forgive me ; for my story now is done :
The nymph was dress'd, and with her two companions,
Having descry'd me, shriek'd, and fled away,
Leaving me motionless, till Leontine,
Th' instructor of my youth, by chance came in,
And wak'd me from the wonder that entranc'd me.

Atti. Behold, my Lord, the man whom you have
nam'd,
The harbinger of Prince Varanes here.

Enter LEONTINE.

Theo. Oh Leontine, ten thousand welcomes meet thee !
Thou foster-father of my tender youth,
Who rear'd the plant, and prun'd it with such care,
How shall I look upon thee, who am fallen
From all the principles of manlier reason,
By thee infus'd, to more than woman's weakness ?
Now, by the Majesty Divine, that awes
This sacred place, I swear you must not kneel ;
And tell me, for I have a thousand things
To ask thee, where, where is my godlike friend ?
Is he arriv'd, and shall I see his face,
Before I'm cloister'd from the world for ever ?

Leon. He comes, my Lord, with all th' expecting joys
Of a young promis'd lover : from his eyes
Big hopes look forth, and boiling Fancy forms
Nothing but Theodosius still before him ;
His thought, his ev'ry word is Theodosius.

Theo. Yet, Leontine, yet answer me once more ;
With tremblings I demand thee.
Say—hast thou seen ? Oh, has that heav'nly form
Appear'd to thee again ? Behold, he's dumb :
Proceed then to the solemn last farewell ;
Never was man so willing and prepar'd.

Enter VARANES, ARANTHES, Attendants.

Var. Where is my friend? oh, where is my belov'd?
My Theodosius! Point him out, ye gods,
That I may press him dead betwixt my arms,
Devour him thus with over-hasty joys,
That languish at his breast, quite out of breath,
And cannot utter more.

Theo. Thou mightiest pleasure,
And greatest blessing that kind Heav'n could send
To glad my parting soul, a thousand welcomes!
Oh, when I look on thee, new starts of glory
Spring in my breast, and with a backward bound
I run the race of lusty youth again.

Var. By Heav'n it joys me too, when I remember
Our thousand pastimes, when we borrow'd names;
Alcides I, and thou my dearest Theseus;
When thro' the woods we chas'd the foaming boar,
With hounds that open'd like Theffalian bulls,
Like tigers flou'd, and fanded as the shore,
With ears and chests that dash'd the morning dew;
Driv'n with the sport, as ships are toss'd in storms,
We ran like winds, and matchless was our course:
Now sweeping o'er the limit of a hill;
Now with a full career come thund'ring down
The precipice, and sweat along the vale.

Theo. Oh glorious time! and when the gath'ring
clouds

Have call'd us home, say, did we rest, my brother?
When on the stage, to the admiring court,
We strove to represent Alcides' fury,
In all that raging heat and pomp of madness,
With which the stately Seneca adorn'd him;
So lively drawn, and painted with such horror,
That we were forc'd to give it o'er; so loud
The virgins shriek'd, so fast they dy'd away.

Var. My Theodosius still; 'tis my lov'd brother;
And, by the gods, we'll see those times again!
Why then has Rumour wrong'd thee, that reported

ACT I. The FORCE of LOVE. 19

Christian enthusiasm had charm'd thee from us ;
That drawn by priests, and work'd by melancholy,
Thou hadst laid the golden reins of empire down,
And sworn thyself a votary for ever.

Theo. 'Tis almost true ; and had not you arriv'd,
The solemn business had by this been ended.
This I have made the Empress of the East,
My eldest sister : these with me retire,
Devoted to the Pow'r whom we adore.

Var. What Pow'r is this that merits such oblations ?
I thought the Sun more great and glorious
Than any that e'er mingled with the gods ;
Yet ev'n to him, my father never offer'd
More than a hecatomb of bulls and horses.
Now, by those golden beams that glad the world,
I swear it is too much : for one of these,
But half so bright, our god would drive no more ;
He'd leave the darken'd globe, and in some cave
Enjoy such charms for ever.

Atti. My Lord, forbear !
Such language does not suit with our devotion :
Nothing profane must dare to murmur here,
Nor stain the hallow'd beauties of the place.
Yet thus far we must yield ; the Emperor
Is not enough prepar'd to leave the world.

Var. Thus low, most rev'rend of this sacred place,
I kneel for pardon, and am half converted,
By your permission, that my Theodosius
Return to my embraces : O, my brother !
Why dost thou droop ? There will be time enough
For pray'r and fasting, and religious vows :
Let us enjoy, while yet thou art my own,
All the magnificence of eastern courts.
I hate to walk a lazy life away :
Let's run the race which Fate has set before us,
And post to the dark goal.

Theo. O cruel destiny !
Why am not I thus too ? Oh, my Varanes !
Why are these costly dishes set before me ?

Why do these sounds of pleasure strike my ears?
 Why are these joys brought to my sick remembrance,
 Who have no appetite, but am to sense,
 From head to foot, all a dead palsy o'er?

Var. Fear not, my friend; all shall be well again:
 For I have thousand ways, and thousand stories,
 To raise thee up to pleasure: we'll unlock
 Our fastest secrets, shed upon each other
 Our tend'rest cares; and quite unbar those doors
 Which shall be shut to all mankind beside.

Atti. Silence and rev'rence are the temple's dues:
 Therefore, while we pursue the sacred rites,
 Be these observ'd, or quit the awful place.
 Imperial Sisters, now twin-stars of Heaven,
 Answer the successor of Chrysostom;
 Without least reservation answer me,
 By those harmonious rules I charg'd ye learn.

ATTICUS *sings.*

*Canst thou, Marina, leave the world,
 The world, that is devotion's bane:
 Where crowns are toss'd, and sceptres hur'd,
 Where Lust and proud Ambition reign?*

2 PRIEST.

*Can you your costly robes forbear,
 To live with us in poor attire?
 Can you from courts to cells repair,
 To sing at midnight in our choir?*

3 PRIEST.

*Can you forget your golden beds,
 Where you might sleep beyond the morn;
 On mats to lay your royal heads,
 And have your beauteous tresses shorn?*

ATTICUS.

*Can you resolve to fast all day,
 And weep and groan to be forgiv'n?
 Can you in broken slumbers pray,
 And by affliction merit Heav'n?*

CHORUS.

Say, votaries, can this be done ?
 While we the Grace Divine implore,
 The world has lost, the battle's won;
 And sin shall never charm ye more.

MARINA sings.

The gate to bliss does open stand,
 And all my penance is in view !
 The world, upon the other hand,
 Cries out, Oh, do not bid adieu !

Yet, sacred Sirs, in these extremes,
 Where pomp and pride their glories tell;
 Where youth and beauty are the themes,
 And plead their moving cause so well;

If aught's that's vain my thoughts possess,
 Or any passions govern here,
 But what divinity may bless;
 Oh, may I never enter there !

FLAVILLA sings.

What, what can pomp or glory do ?
 Or what can human charms persuade ?
 That mind that has a heav'n in view,
 How can it be by earth betray'd ?

No monarch, full of youth and fame,
 The joy of eyes, and Nature's pride,
 Should once my thoughts from heav'n reclaim,
 Though now he woo'd me for his bride.

Haste then, oh haste, and take us in,
 For ever lock Religion's door,
 Secure us from the charms of sin,
 And let us see the world no more.

ATTICUS *sings.*

*Hark, hark! behold the heav'nly choir :
They cleave the air in bright attire :
And see, his lute each angel brings;
And hark, divinely thus he sings:
" To the Powers Divine all glory be given,
" By men upon earth, and angels in heaven."*

[SCENE *shuts* : and all the Priests, with Marina and Flavilla, disappear.

Pul. For ever gone ! for ever parted from me !
Oh, Theodosius, till this cruel moment
I never knew how tenderly I lov'd 'em ;
But on this everlasting separation,
Methinks my soul has left me, and my time
Of dissolution points me to the grave.

Theo. Oh, my Varanes, does not now thy temper
Bate something of its fire ? dost thou not melt
In mere compassion of my sister's fate,
And cool thyself with one relenting thought ?

Var. Yes, my dar'd soul rolls inward ; melancholy,
Which I ne'er felt before, now comes upon me ;
And I begin to loath all human greatness :

Oh, sigh not then, nor thy hard fate deplore !
For 'tis resolv'd we will be kings no more :
We'll fly all courts, and Love shall be our guide ;
Love that's more worth than all the world beside.
Princes are barr'd the liberty to roam ;
The fetter'd mind still languishes at home ;
In golden bands she treads the thoughtful round ;
Bus'ness and cares eternally abound.

" And when for air the goddess would unbind,
" She's clogg'd with sceptres, and to crowns con-
fin'd."

[*Exeunt.*

ACT II. SCENE I.

Enter PULCHERIA, JULIA, Attendants.

PULCHERIA.

THESE packets for the Emperor Honorius :
Be swift, let th' agent haste to Rome—
I hear, my Julia, that our general
Is from the Goths return'd with conquest home.

Jul. He is : to-day I saw him in the presence,
Sharp to the courtiers, as he ever was,
Because they went not with him to the wars :
To you he bows, and sues to kiss your hand.

Pul. He shall, my dearest Julia : oft I've told thee
The secret of my soul ; if e'er I marry,
Marcian's my husband : he's a man, my Julia,
Whom I have study'd long, and found him perfect :
Old Rome at ev'ry glance looks through his eyes,
And kindles the beholders ! Some sharp atoms
Run through his frame, which I could wish were out ;
He sickens at the softness of the Emp'r,or,
And speaks too freely of our female court ;
Then sighs, comparing it with what Rome was.

Enter MARCIAN and LUCIUS.

Pul. Ha ! who are these that dare profane this place
With more than barb'rous insolence ?

Mar. At your feet,
Behold, I cast the scourge of these offenders,
And kneel to kiss your hand.

Pul. Put up your sword,
And, ere I bid you welcome from the wars,
Be sure you clear your honour of this rudeness ;
Or, Marcian, leave the court.

Mar. Thus then, Madam :
The Emperor receiv'd me with affection,
Embrac'd me for my conquests, and retir'd ;

When on a sudden all the gilded flies
 That buz about the court, came flutt'ring round me :
 This, with affected cringes, and minc'd words,
 Begs me to tell my tale of victories ;
 Which done, he thanks me, slips behind his fellow,
 Whispers him in the ear, then smiles and listens,
 While I relate my story once again :
 A third comes in, and asks me the same favour ;
 Whereon they laugh, while I still ignorant
 Go on ; but one behind more impudent,
 Strikes on my shoulder ; then they laugh'd out-right :
 But then I, guessing the abuse too late,
 Return'd my knight behind a box o' th' ear ;
 Then drew, and briefly told them they were rascals :
 They laughing still, cry'd out, The Gen'ral's musty ;
 Whereon I drove them, Madam, as you saw :
 This is in short the truth : I leave the judgment
 To your own justice ; if I have done ill,
 Sentence me, and I'll leave the court for ever.

Pul. First you are welcome, Marcian, from the wars ;
 And still, whene'er occasion calls for arms,
 Heav'n send the Emperor a general,
 Renown'd as Marcian ! As to what is past,
 I think the world will rather praise than censure
 Pulcheria, when she pardons you the action.

Mar. Gods, gods ! and thou great founder of old
 Rome !

What is become of all that mighty spirit,
 That rais'd our empire to a pitch so high ?
 Where is it pent ? What, but almighty power,
 Could thus confine it, that but some few atoms
 Now run through all the East and Occident ?

Pul. Speak calmly, Marcian——

Mar. Who can be temp'rate,
 That thinks as I do, Madam ? Why, here's a fellow ;
 I have seen him fight against a troop of Vandals,
 In your defence, as if he lov'd to bleed :
 Come to my arms, my dear ! thou canst not talk,
 But hast a soul above the proudest of 'em.

Oh, Madam, when he has been all over blood,
And hack'd with wounds that seem'd to mouth his praises;
I've seen him smile still as he push'd death from him,
And with his actions rally distant fate.

Pul. He has a noble form.

Mar. Yet ev'n this man,
That fought so bravely in his country's cause,
This excellent man, this morning, in the presence,
Did I see wrong'd, before the Emperor,
Scorn'd and despis'd, because he could not cringe,
Nor plant his feet as some of them could do.
One said his clothes were not well made, and damn'd
His taylor—Another said he look'd
As if he had not lost his maidenhead.
If things are suffer'd to be thus, down all
Authority, pre-eminence, degree, and virtue;
Let Rome be never mention'd; no, i' th' name
Of all the gods, be she forgotten ever!
Effeminate Persians, and the Lydian softness,
Make all your fights: Marcian shall out no more;
For, by my arms, it makes a woman of me,
And my swell'n eyes run o'er, to think this worth,
This fuller honour than the whole court holds,
Should be ridiculous to knaves and fools;
Should starve for want of what is necessary
To life's convenience: when luxurious bawds
Are so o'ergrown with fat, and cramm'd with riot,
That they can hardly walk without an engine.

Pul. Why did you not inform the Emperor?

Mar. Because he will not hear me! Alas, good man,
He flies from this bad world; and still when wars
And dangers come, he runs to his devotions,
To your new thing, I know not what you call it,
Which Constantine began.

Pul. How, Marcian! are not you
Of that religion which the Emp'rour owns?

Mar. No, Madam; if you'll see my naked thought,
I am not of their principle that take
A wrong; so far from bearing with a foe,

I would strike first, like old Rome ; I wou'd forth,
 Elbow the neighbouring nations round about,
 Invade, inlarge my empire to the bounds
 Of the too narrow universe. Yes, I own
 That I despise your holy innovations.
 I'm for the Roman gods, for fun'ral piles,
 For mounting eagles, and the fancy'd greatness
 Of our forefathers. Methinks my heated spirit
 Cou'd utter things worth losing of my head.

Pul. Speak freely, Marcian ; for I know thee honest.

Mar. Oh, Madam! long, long may the Emp'ror live !
 But, I must say, his gentle disposition
 Suits not, alas ! the oriental sway :
 Bid him but look on Pharamond : oh, gods !
 Awake him with the image of that spirit,
 Which, like a pyramid revers'd, is grown
 Ev'n from a point to the most dreadful greatness ?
 His very name already shakes the world ;
 And still in person heading his first squadrons,
 Like the first Cæsar o'er the hardy Gauls,
 He seems another thunderbolt of war.

Pul. I oft have blam'd my brother most for this,
 That to my hand he leaves the state-affairs :
 And how that sounds, you know——

Mar. Forgive me, Madam ;
 I think that all the greatness of your sex,
 Rome's Clelia, and the fan'd Semiramis,
 With all the Amazonian valour too,
 Meet in Pulcheria : yet, I say, forgive me,
 If, with reluctance I behold a woman
 Sit at the empire's helm, and steer the world.

Pul. I stand rebuk'd——

Mar. Mark but the growing French.
 The most auspicious omen of their greatness,
 That I can guess, is their late Salique law,
 Bless'd by their priests, their Salii, and pronounc'd
 To stand for ever ; which excludes all women
 From the imperial crown : but, oh ! I speak
 The least of all those infinite grievances,

Which makes the subjects murmur : in the army,
Though I proceeded still like Hannibal,
And punish'd ev'ry mutineer with death ;
Yet, oh ! it stabb'd me thro' and thro' the soul
To pass the wretches doom, because I knew
With justice they complain'd ; for hard they fought,
And with their blood earn'd that forbidden bread,
Which some at court, and great ones, tho' unnam'd,
Cast to their hounds, while the poor soldiers starv'd—

Pul. Your pity too, in mournful fellowship,
No doubt might soothe their murmurs.

Mar. Yes, it did.

That I might put 'em once again in heart,
I said, 'twas true the Emp'ror was to blame,
Who dealt too coldly with his faithful servants,
And paid their great arrears by second hand :
I promis'd too, when we return'd to court,
Things should be mended——

But, how ! Oh gods ! forgive my blood this transport !
To the eternal shame of female counsels !

And to the blast of Theodosius' name,
Whom never warlike chronicle shall mention !

Oh, let me speak it with a Roman spirit,
We were receiv'd like undone prodigals,
By curs'd ungrateful stewards, with cold looks,
Who yet got all by those poor wretches ruin ;
Like malefactors at the hands of justice.

I blush, I almost weep with bursting rage !
If thus receiv'd, how paid our long arrears ?

Why, as entrusted misers pay the rights
Of helpless widows, or the orphans tears.

Oh, Soldier ! for to thee, to thee I speak it,
Bawds for the drudgery of citizens' wives,
Would better pay debilitated stallions.

Madam, I've said perhaps too much : if so,
It matters not ; for he who lyes, like me,
On the hard ground, is sure to fall no further.

Pul. I've given you patient hearing, honest Marcian :
And, as far as I can see into your temper,

I speak my serious judgment in cold blood,
 With strictest consultation on the matter ;
 I think, this seeming plain and honest Marcian
 An exquisite and most notorious traitor.

Mar. Ha ! traitor !

Pul. Yes, a most notorious traitor.

Mar. Your grandfather, whose frown could awe the
 world,

Would not have call'd me so—or if he had——

Pul. You would have taken it—but to the bus'ness ;
 Was't not enough, oh Heav'n ! thou know'st too much !
 At first to own yourself an infidel,
 A bold contemner, ev'n to blasphemy,
 Of that religion which we all profess ;
 For which your heart's best blood can ne'er suffice ;
 But you must dare, with a seditious army,
 Thus to conspire against the Emperor !
 I mention not your impudence to me,
 Taxing the folly of my government
 Ev'n to my face ; such an irreverence,
 As sure no barb'rous Vandal would have urg'd ;
 Beside your libelling all the court, as if
 You had engross'd the whole world's honesty :
 And flatt'ers, fools, and sycophants, and knaves,
 Such was your language, did inhabit here.

Mar. You wrest my honest meaning, by the gods !
 You do ; and if you thus go on, I feel
 My struggling spirit will no longer bear it.

Pul. I thought the meaning of all rational men
 Should still be gather'd out of their discourse :
 Nor are you so imprudent, without thinking,
 To vent such words, tho' now you fain would hide it.
 You find the guilt, and balk the accusation ;
 But think not you shall 'scape so easily.
 Once more I do confront you, as a traitor ;
 And, as I am entrusted with full pow'r,
 Divest you, in the name of Theodosius,
 Of all your offices, commissions, honours ;
 Command you leave the court within three days,

Loyal, plain-dealing, honest Marcian.

Mar. Gods! Gods!

Pul. What now, ha! does the traitor murmur?
If in three days; mark me, 'tis I that doom thee,
Rastr inconsiderable man, a wretch beneath
The torments I could execute upon thee:
If after three days space thou'rt found in court,
Thou dy'st; thy head, thy head shall pay the forfeit.
Farewell; now rage, now rail, and curse the court;
Saucily dare t' abuse the best of Princes,
And let thy lawless tongue lash all it can;
Do like a madman rage, deplore thy fortune,
While pages laugh at thee. Then haste to th' army,
Grow popular, and lead the multitude:
Preach up thy wrongs, and drive the giddy beast
To kick at Cæsar. Nay, if thou weep'st, I'm gone.
On, Julia; if I stay, I shall weep too,
Yet 'tis but just, that I the heart should see
Of him who once must lord it over me.

[Exit Pulcheria, &c.]

Luc. Why do you droop, Sir—come, no more o' this;
You are, and shall be, still our general;
Say but the word, I'll fill the Hippodrome
With squadrons that shall make the Emp'ror tremble:
We'll fire the court about his ears.
Methinks, like Junius Brutus, I have watch'd
An opportunity, and now it comes:
Few words and I are friends; but, noble Marcian,
If yet thou art not more than General,
Ere dead of night, say Lucius is a coward.

Mar. I charge thee in the name of all the gods,
Come back: I charge thee by the name of friend.
All's well, and I rejoice I am no general.
But hush! within three days we must be gone:
And then, my friend, farewell to ceremony.
We'll fly to some far distant lonely village,
Forget our former state, and breed with slaves:
Sweat in the heat of day, and when night comes,
With bodies coarsely fill'd, and vacant souls,

Sleep like the labour'd hinds, and never think;
For if I think again, I shall go mad.

Enter LEONTINE and ATHENAI, &c.

Therefore no thought. But see, we're interrupted.
Oh court! Oh Emperor! yet let death threaten,
I'll find a time. Till then be still, my soul—
No gen'ral now! a member of thy country,
But most corrupt; therefore to be cut off,
Loyal, plain dealing, honest Marcian!
A slave, a traitor! Oh y' eternal gods! [*Exeunt.*]

Leon. So, Athenais! now our compliment
To the young Persian Prince is at an end:
What then remains, but that we take our leave,
And bid him everlastingly farewell?

Athe. My Lord!

Leon. I say that decency requires
We should be gone; nor can you stay with honour.

Athe. Most true, my Lord.

Leon. The court is now at peace,
The Emp'r's sisters are retir'd for ever,
And he himself compos'd: what hinders then,
But that we bid adieu to Prince Varanes?

Athe. Ah, Sir, why will you break my heart?

Leon. I would not.

Thou art the only comfort of my age:
Like an old tree I stand amongst the storms;
Thou art the only limb that I have left me; [*She kneels.*]
My dear green branch! and how I prize thee, child,
Heav'n only knows! why dost thou kneel and weep?

Athe. Because you are so good, and will, I hope,
Forgive my fault, who first occasion'd it.

Leon. I charg'd thee to receive and hear the Prince.

Athe. You did, and, O my Lord! I heard too much;
Too much, I fear, for my eternal quiet.

Leon. Rise, Athenais, credit him who bears
More years than thou: Varanes has deceiv'd thee.

Athe. How do we differ then! you judge the Prince
Impious and base; while I take Heav'n to witness.

Act II. The FORCE of LOVE. 31

I think him the most virtuous of men :
Therefore take heed, my Lord, how you accuse him
Before you make the trial. Alas ! Varanes,
If thou art false, there's no such thing on earth
As solid goodness or substantial honour.
A thousand times, my Lord, he has sworn to give me
(And I believe his oaths) his crown and empire,
That day I make him master of my heart.

Leon. That day he'll make thee mistress of his pow'r,
Which carries a foul name among the vulgar.
No, Athenais, let me see thee dead,
Borne a pale corpse, and gently laid in earth ;
So I may say, she's chaste, and dy'd a virgin,
Rather than view thee with these wounded eyes
Seated upon the throne of Ildigerdes,
The blast of common tongues, the nobles' scorn,
Thy father's curse ; that is, the Prince's whore.

Athe. Oh horrid supposition ! how I detest it !
Be witness Heav'n, that sees my secret thoughts !
Have I for this, my Lord, been taught by you
The nicest justice, and severest virtue ;
To fear no death, to know the end of life,
And with long search discern the highest good ?
No, Athenais, when the day beholds thee
So scandalously rais'd, pride cast thee down,
The scorn of honour and the people's prey !
No, cruel Leontine, not to redeem
That aged head from the descending axe,
Not tho' I saw thy trembling body rack'd,
Thy wrinkles all about thee fill'd with blood,
Would I for empire, to the man I love,
Be made the object of unlawful pleasure.

Leon. Oh greatly said ! and, by the blood which
warms me,
Which runs as rich as any Athens holds !
It would improve the virtue of the world,
If ev'ry day a thousand votaries,
And thousand virgins, came from far to hear thee !
Athe. Look down, ye pow'rs ; take notice, we obey

The rigid principles ye have infus'd;
 Yet, oh my noble father, to convince you,
 Since you will have it so, propose a marriage:
 Tho' with the thought I'm cover'd o'er with blushes;
 Not that I doubt the Prince; that were to doubt
 The heav'ns themselves. I know he is all truth:
 But modesty——
 The virgin's troublesome and constant guest,
 That, that alone forbids——

Leon. I wish to Heav'n
 There prove no greater bar to my belief.
 Behold the Prince. I will retire a while,
 And, when occasion calls, come to thy aid. [*Ex. Leon.*]

Enter VARANES and ARANTHES.

Var. To fix her on the throne, to me, seems little.
 Were I a god, yet would I raise her higher;
 This is the nature of thy Prince. But oh!
 As to the world, thy judgment soars above me,
 And I am dar'd with this gigantic honour;
 Glory forbids her prospect to a crown;
 Nor must she gaze that way: my haughty soul,
 That day when she ascends the throne of Cyrus,
 Will leave my body pale, and to the stars
 Retire in blushes, and quite lost for ever.

Aran. What do you purpose then?

Var. I know not what;
 But, see, she comes, the glory of my arms,
 The only bus'ness of my instant thought,
 My soul's best joy, and all my true repose.
 I swear I cannot bear these strange desires,
 These strong impulses, which will shortly leave me
 Dead at thy feet——

Athe. What have you found, my Lord,
 In me so harsh or cruel, that you fear
 To speak your griefs?

Var. First let me kneel and swear,
 And on thy hand seal my religious vow;
 Strait let the breath of gods blow me from earth,

ACT II. The FORCE of LOVE. 33

Swept from the book of fame, forgotten ever,
If I prefer thee not, O Athenais,
To all the Persian greatness!

Athe. I believe you :

For I have heard you swear as much before.

Var. Hast thou ? Oh, why did I swear again ?
But that my love knew nothing worthier of thee,
And could no better way express my passion.

Athe. O rise, my Lord——

Var. I will do ev'ry thing
Which Athenais bids : if there be more
In nature to convince thee of my love,
Whisper it, oh some god, into my ear ;
And on her breasts thus to her list'ning soul
I'll breathe the inspiration. Wilt thou not speak ?
What ! but one sigh, no more ! can that suffice
For all my vast expence of prodigal love ?
Oh Athenais, what shall I say or do,
To gain the thing I wish ?

Athe. What's that, my Lord ?

Var. Thus to approach thee still ; thus to behold
thee——

Yet there is more——

Athe. My Lord, I dare not hear you.

Var. Why dost thou frown at what thou dost not
know ?

'Tis an imagination which ne'er pierc'd thee ;
Yet as 'tis ravishing, 'tis full of honour.

Athe. I must not doubt you, Sir : but, oh, I tremble,
To think, if Isdigerdes should behold you,
Should hear you thus protesting to a maid
Of no degree, but virtue, in the world——

Var. No more of this, no more ; for I disdain
All pomp, when thou art by : far be the noise
Of kings and courts from us, whose gentle souls
Our kinder stars have steer'd another way !
Free as the forest-birds, we'll pair together,
Without rememb'ring who our fathers were ;
Ely to the arbours, grots, and flow'ry meads,

34 THEODOSIUS: or, Act II.

And in soft murmurs interchange our souls;
Together drink the chrystal of the stream,
Or taste the yellow fruit which Autumn yields;
And, when the golden ev'ning calls us home,
Wing to our downy nest, and sleep till morn.

Athe. Ah Prince! no more! Forbear, forbear, to
charm me,
Since I am doom'd to leave you, Sir, for ever.

Var. Hold, Athenais——

Athe. I know your royal temper,
And that high honour reigns within your breast,
Which would disdain to waste so many hours
With one of humble blood compar'd to you;
Unless strong passion sway'd your thoughts to love her,
Therefore receive, O Prince! and take it kindly,
For none on earth but you could win it from me,
Receive the gift of my eternal love;
'Tis all I can bestow, nor is it little;
For sure a heart so coldly chaste as mine;
No charms but yours, my Lord, could e'er have warm'd?

Var. Well have you made amends by this last
comfort,

For the cold dart you shot at me before.
For this last goodness, oh, my Athenais!
(For now, methinks, I ought to call you mine)
I empty all my soul in thanks before you:
Yet, oh, one fear remains; like death it chills me;
Why my relenting love did talk of parting?

Athe. Look there, and cease your wonder: I have
sworn

T' obey my father; and he calls me hence——

Enter LEONTINE.

Var. Ha, Leontine! by which of all my actions
Have I so deeply injur'd thee, to merit
The smartest wound revenge could form to end me?

Leon. Answer me now, O Prince! for Virtue
prompts me,
And honesty will dally now no longer,

ACT II. The FORCE of LOVE. 35

What can the end of all this passion be?
 Glory requires this strict account, and asks
 What you intend at last with Athenais?

Var. How, Leontine!

Leon. You saw her, Sir, at Athens; said you lov'd
 her.

I charg'd her humbly to receive the honour,
 And hear your passion. Has she not, Sir, obey'd me?

Var. She has, I thank the gods; but whither would'st
 thou?

Leon. Having resolv'd to visit Theodosius,
 You swore you would not go without my daughter;
 Whereon I gave command, that she should follow.

Var. Yes, Leontine, my old remembrancer,
 Most learn'd of all philosophers, you did.

Leon. Thus long she has attended; you have seen her,
 Sounded her virtues, and her imperfections;
 Therefore, dread Sir, forgive this bolder charge
 Which honour sounds; and now let me demand you—

Var. Now help, Arantes, or I'm dash'd for ever.

Aran. Whatever happens, Sir, disdain the marriage.

Leon. Can your high thoughts so far forget them-
 selves,

T' admit this humble virgin for your bride?

Var. Ha!

Athe. He blushes, Gods! and stammers at the question.

Leon. Why do you walk and chafe yourself, my Lord?
 The business is not much.

Var. How, Leontine?

Not much! I know that she deserves a crown;
 Yet 'tis to reason much, though not to love.
 And sure the world would blush to see the daughter
 Of a philosopher on the throne of Cyrus.

Athe. Undone for ever!

Leon. Is this your answer, Sir?

Var. Why dost thou urge me thus, and push me to
 The very brink of glory? where, alas!
 I look, and tremble at the vast descent:
 Yet even there, to the vast bottom, down

My rash adventurer Love would have me leap,
And grasp my Athenais with my ruin.

Leon. 'Tis well, my Lord——

Var. Why dost thou then provoke me?

I thought that Persia's court had store of honour
To satisfy the heighth of thy ambition.

Besides, old man, my love is too well grown,

To want a tutor for his good behaviour:

What he will do, he will do of himself,

And not be taught by you——

Leon. I know he will not!

Fond tears, away! I know, I know he will not;

But he would buy with his old man's preferment,

My daughter for your whore.

Var. Away, I say! my soul disdains the motion!

Leon. The motion of a marriage; 'yes, I see it:

Your angry looks, and haughty words, betray it:

I found it at the first. I thank you, Sir,

You have at last rewarded your old tutor

For all his cares, his watchings, services.

Yet let me tell you, Sir, this humble maid,

This daughter of a poor philosopher,

Shall, if she please, be seated on a throne

As high as that of the immortal Cyrus.

Var. I think that age, and deep philosophy,

Have crack'd thy brain: farewell, old Leontine;

Retire to rest; and when this brawling humour

Is rock'd asleep, I'll meet my Athenais,

And clear th' accounts of love, which thou hast blotted.

[*Exit.*]

Leon. Old Leontine! perhaps I'm mad indeed.

But hold my heart, and let that solid virtue,

Which I so long ador'd, still keep the reins.

O Athenais! But I will not chide thee:

Fate is in all our actions; and methinks,

At least a father judges so, it has

Rebuk'd thee smartly for thy easiness:

There is a kind of mournful eloquence

In thy dumb grief, which shames all clam'rous sorrow.

Athe. Alas, my breast is full of death! methinks
I fear even you—

Leon. Why shouldst thou fear thy father?

Athe. Because you have the figure of a man!
Is there, O speak, a possibility
To be forgiven?

Leon. Thy father does forgive thee,
And honour will; but on this hard condition,
Never to see him more.—

Athe. See him! Oh, Heavens!

Leon. Unless it be, my daughter, to upbraid him:
Not though he should repent and strait return,
Nay, proffer thee his crown—No more of that.
Honour too cries, Revenge, revenge thy wrongs,
Revenge thyself, revenge thy injur'd father.
For 'tis revenge so wise, so glorious too,
As all the world shall praise—

Athe. Oh, give me leave;
For yet I am all tenderness: the woman,
The weak, the mild, the fond, the coward woman,
Dares not look forth; but runs about my breast,
And visits all the warmer mansions there,
Where she so oft has harbour'd false Varanes,
Cruel Varanes! false forsworn Varanes!

Leon. Is this forgetting him? Is this the course
Which honour bids thee take?

Athe. Ah, Sir, allow
A little time for love to make his way:
Hardly he won the place, and many sighs,
And many tears, and thousand oaths it cost him.
And oh, I find he will not be dislodg'd
Without a groan at parting hence for ever!
No, no, he vows he will not yet be rais'd
Without whole floods of grief at his farewell,
Which thus I sacrifice: and oh, I swear,
Had he prov'd true, I would as easily
Have empty'd all my blood, and died to serve him,
As now I shed these drops, or vent these sighs,
To shew how well, how perfectly I lov'd him.

Leon. No woman sure, but thou, so low in fortune,
 Therefore the nobler is thy fair example,
 Would thus have griev'd, because a prince ador'd her;
 Nor will it be believ'd in after-times,
 That there was ever such a maid in being:
 Yet do I still advise, preserve thy virtue;
 And since he does disdain thee for his bride,
 Scorn thou to be ——

Athe. Hold, Sir, oh! hold, forbear:
 For my nice soul abhors the very sound;
 Yet, with the shame of that, and the desire
 Of an immortal name, I am inspir'd!
 All kinder thoughts are fled for ever from me;
 All tenderness, as if I ne'er had lov'd,
 Has left my bosom colder than the grave.

Leon. Oh, Athenais! on; 'tis bright before thee.
 Pursue the track, and thou shalt be a star.

Athe. Oh, Leontine, I swear, my noble father,
 That I will starve, ere once forego my virtue:
 And thus let's join to contradict the world:
 That empire could not tempt a poor old man
 To sell his prince the honour of his daughter:
 And she too match'd the spirit of her father;

Tho' humbly born, and yet more numbly bred,
 She for her fame refus'd a royal bed;
 Who, tho' she lov'd, yet did put off the hour,
 Nor could her virtue be betray'd by pow'r.

"Patterns like these will guilty courts improve,

"And teach the fair to blush at conscious love:

"Then let all maids for honour come in view,

"If any maid can more for glory do." [Exeunt.

ACT III. SCENE I.

Enter VARANES and ARANTHES.

VARANES.

COME to my arms, my faithful, dear Arantes,
Soft counsellor, companion of my youth.
If I had longer been alone, most sure,
With the distraction that surrounds my heart,
My hand would have rebell'd against his master,
And done a murder here.

Aran. The gods forbid.

Var. I swear, I press thee with an hearty joy,
As ever fearful bride embrac'd her man,
When from a dream of death she wak'd, and found
Her lover safe, and sleeping by her side.

Aran. The cause, my Lord?

Var. Early thou know'st last night I went to rest:
But long, my friend, e'er slumber clos'd my eyes,
Long was the combat fought, 'twixt love and glory;
The fever of my passion burnt me up;
My pangs grew stronger, and my rack was doubled;
My bed was all afloat with the cold drops,
That mortal pain wrang from my lab'ring limbs;
My groans more deep than other's dying gasps;
Therefore, I charge thee, haste to her apartment;
I do conjure thee, tell her, tell her all
My fears can urge, or fondness can invent.
Tell her how I repent, say any thing;
For any thing I'll do to quench my fires;
Say, I will marry her now on the instant:
Say all that I would say; yet in the end
My love shall make it more than gods can utter.

Aran. My Lord, both Leontine and she are gone
From their apartment——

Var. Ha! gone, say'st thou! whither?

40 THEODOSIUS: or, ACT III.

Aran. That was my whole employment all this day ;

But, Sir, I grieve to speak it, they have left
No track behind for care to find 'em out :
Nor is it possible——

Var. It is, it shall ;

I'll struggle with impossibilities,
To find my Athenais : not the walls
Of Athens, nor of Thebes shall hide her from me,
I'll bring the force of all my father's arms,
And lay 'em waste, but I'll redeem my love.
Oh, Leontine ! morose old Leontine !
Thou mere philosopher ! Oh, cruel sage,
Who for one hasty word, one chol'ric doubt,
Hast turn'd the scale : tho' in the sacred balance
My life, my glory, and my empire hung !

Aran. Most sure, my Lord, they are retir'd to Athens.

I will send post to-night.

Var. No, no, Arantes :

Prepare my chariots ; for I'll go in person.
I swear, till now, till I began to fear
Some other might enjoy my Athenais,
I swear I did not know how much I lov'd her.
But let's away : I'll to the Emperor ;
Thou to the hasty management of my business :
Prepare ; to-day I'll go, to-day I'll find her ;
No more ; I'll take my leave of Theodosius,
And meet thee on the Hippodrome. Away :
Let the wild hurry of thy master's love
Make quick thy apprehension : haste, and leave me.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.

PULCHERIA, ATTICUS, LEONTINE, *Votaries leading
ATHENAIS in procession after her baptism, to be
confirm'd.*

ATTICUS *sings.*

*Oh Chrysothom! look down and see
An off'ring worthy Heav'n and thee!
So rich the victim, bright and fair,
That she on earth appears a star.*

Chor. *Eudofia is the virgin's name,
And after-times shall sing her fame.*

ATTICUS *sings.*

*Lead her, Votaries; lead her in:
Her holy birth does now begin.*

1. Vot. *In humble weeds, but clean array,
Your hours shall sweetly pass away;
And when the rites divine are pass'd,*

*To pleasant gardens you shall haste,
2. Vot. Where many a flow'ry bed we have,
That emblem still to each a grave;
And, when within the stream we look,
With tears we use to swell the brook;
But, oh! when in the liquid glass
Our heav'n appears, we sigh to pass!*

Chor. *For heav'n alone we are design'd;
And all things bring our heav'n to mind.*

*Athe. O Princess! O most worthy of the world,
That is submitted by its Emperor
To your most wise and providential sway!
What Greek or Roman eloquence can paint
The rapture and devotion of my soul!
I am adopted yours; you are my goddess,
That have new-form'd, new-moulded my conceptions,
And, by the platform of a work divine,
New-fram'd, new-built me to your own desires:
Thrown all the lumber of my passions out,
And made my heart a mansion of perfection;*

Clean as an anchorite's grot, or vot'ry's cell,
And spotless as the glories of his steps,
Whom we far off adore !

Pul. Rise, Eudofia,
And let me fold my Christian in my arms :
With this dear pledge of an eternal love,
I seal thee, O Eudofia ! mine for ever.
Accept, blest'd charge, the vows of my affection ;
For, by the sacred friendship that I give thee,
I think that Heav'n by miracle did send thee,
To ease my cares, to help me in my counsels,
To be my sister, partner in my bed ;
And equally, thro' my whole course of life,
To be the better part of thy Pulcheria,
And share my griefs and joys.

Athe. No, Madam, no ;
Exclude the cares that this sad wretch must bring you ;
Oh ! rather let me leave this world for ever ;
Or if I must partake your royal secrets,
If you resolve to load me with such honour,
Let it be far from cities, far from courts,
Where I may fly all human conversation ;
Where I may never see, nor hear, nor name,
Nor think, nor dream, O Heav'n ! if possible,
Of mankind more.

Pul. What now, in tears, Eudofia ?

Athe. Far from the guilt of palaces, oh send me !
Drive me, oh drive me from the traitor man !
So I might 'scape that monster, let me dwell
In lions haunts, or in some tyger's den ;
Place me on some steep, craggy, ruin'd rock,
That bellies out, just dropping in the ocean ;
Bury me in the hollow of its womb,
Where, starving on my cold and flinty bed,
I may from far, with giddy apprehension,
See infinite fathoms down the rumbling deep.
Yet not ev'n there, in that vast whirl of death,
Can there be found so terrible a ruin,
As man, false man, smiling destructive man.

Pul. Then thou hast lov'd, Eudofia, oh, my sister!
 Still nearer to my heart, so much the dearer;
 Because our fates are like, and hand in hand
 Our fortunes lead us through the maze of life:
 I'm glad that thou hast lov'd; nay, lov'd with danger,
 Since thou hast 'scap'd the ruin—Methinks it lightens
 The weight of my calamities, that thou
 (In all things else so perfect and divine)
 Art yet akin to my infirmity,
 And bear'st thy part in love's melodious ill:
 Love, that, like bane perfum'd, infects the mind,
 That sad delight that charms all womankind.

Athe. Yes, Madam, I confess that love has charm'd me;
 But never shall again. No, I renounce him;
 Inspire me all the wrongs of abus'd women,
 All you that have been cozen'd by false men;
 See what a strict example I will make:
 But for the perjuries of one I will revenge ye
 For all that's past, that's present, and to come.

Pul. Oh, thou far more than the most masculine
 virtue!

Where, our *Astrea*! where, oh, drowning brightness,
 Where hast thou been so long? Let me again
 Protest my admiration and my love;
 Let me declare aloud, while thou art here,
 While such clear virtue shines within our circle,
 Vice shall no more appear within the palace,
 But hide her dazzled eyes, and this be call'd
The holy Court.—But, lo! the Emp'ror comes.

Enter THEODOSIUS and Attendants.

Beauty, like thine, may drive that form away,
 That has so long entranc'd his soul—My Lord—

Theo. If yet, alas! I might but hope to see her:
 But, oh, forgive me, Heav'n! this wilder start,
 That thus would reach impossibility:
 No, no, I never must behold her more;
 As well my *Atticus* might raise the dead,
 As *Leontine* should charm that form in view.

Pul. My Lord, I came to give your grief a cure,
With purer flames to draw that cruel fire
That tortur'd you so long——Behold this virgin——
The daughter of your tutor Leontine.

Theo. Ha!

Pul. She is your sister's charge, and made a Christian,
And Athenais is Eudofia now.
Be sure a fairer never grac'd religion;
And for her virtue, she transcends example.

Theo. O all ye blest'd above, how can this be?
Am I awake? or is this possible? [*Athen. kneels.*]

Pul. She kneels, my Lord: will you not go and raise
her?

Theo. Nay, do thou raise her; for I'm rooted here:
Yet if laborious love and melancholy
Have not o'ercome me, and quite turn'd me mad,
It must be she, that naked dazzling sweetness!
The very figure of that morning star,
That, dropping pearls, and shedding dewy beams,
Fled from the greedy waves when I approach'd.
Answer me, Leontine! Am I distracted?
Or is this true? By thee in all encounters
I will be rul'd; in temperance and wildness,
When reason clashes with extravagance:
But speak——

Leon. 'Tis true, my Lord; this is my daughter,
Whom I conceal'd in Persia from all eyes
But yours; when Chance directed you that way.

Theo. He says 'tis true; why then this heartless car-
riage?

Oh, were I proof against the darts of love,
And cold to beauty, as the marble lover
That lyes, without a thought, upon his tomb;
Would not this glorious dawn of life run through me;
And waken Death itself?——Why am I slow then?
What hinders now, but that, in spite of rules,
I burst through all the bands of death that holds me,
[*He kneels.*]

And fly with such a haste to that appearance,
As bury'd saints shall make at the last summons?

ACT III. The FORCE of LOVE. 45

Athe. The Emp'ror at my feet ! O Sir, forgive me :
Drown me not thus with everlasting shame.
Both heaven and earth must blush at such a view ;
Nor can I bear it longer——

Leon. My Lord, she is unworthy——

Theo. Ha ! what say'st thou, Leontine ?
Unworthy ! O thou atheist to perfection !
All that the blooming earth could send forth fair ;
All that the gaudy heavens could drop down glorious !
Unworthy say'st thou ! Wert thou not her father,
I swear I would revenge——But haste, and tell me ;
For love like mine will bear no second thought :
Can all the honours of the Orient,
Thus sacrific'd with the most pure affection,
With spotless thoughts, and languishing desires,
Obtain, O Leontine, (the crown at last),
To thee I speak, thy daughter to my bride ?

Leon. My Lord, the honour bears such estimation,
It calls the blood into my aged cheeks,
And quite o'erwhelms my daughter with confusion :
Who, with her body, prostrate on the earth,
Ought to adore you for the proffer'd glory.

Theo. Let me embrace, and thank thee. O kind
Heaven !

O Atticus ! Pulcheria ! O my father !
Was ever change like mine ? Run through the streets ;
Who waits there ? Run, and, loud as Fame can speak,
With trumpet sounds proclaim your Emp'ror's joy ;
And, as of old, on the great festival
Of her they call *the mother of the gods*,
Let all work cease ; at least, an oaken garland
Crown each plebeian head : let sprightly bowls
Be dol'd about, and the tofs'd cymbals sound ;
Tell 'em, their much lamented Theodosius,
By miracle, is brought from death to life !
His melancholy's gone, and now once more
He shall appear at the state's helm again ;
Nor fear a wreck, while this bright star directs us :
For while she shines, no sands, no cowering rocks

45 THEODOSIUS: or, ACT III.

Shall ly unseen, but I will cut my way,
Secure as Neptune, through the highest stream,
And to the port in safety steer the world.

Athe. Alas! my Lord, consider my extraction,
With all my other wants——

Theo. Peace, Empress, peace!
No more the daughter of old Leontine;
A Christian now, and partner of the East.

Athe. My father has dispos'd me, you command me;
What can I answer then, but my obedience?

Theo. Attend her, dear Pulcheria; and, oh, tell her,
To-morrow, if she please, I will be happy. [*Exit Pul.*
O why should I my joys so long delay?
Time imp thy wings, let not thy minutes stay,
But to a moment change the tedious day.
The day! 'twill be an age before to-morrow:
An age, a death, a vast eternity,
Where we shall cold, and past enjoyment, ly.

Enter VARANES and ARANTHES.

Var. O Theodosius!

Theo. Ha! my brother here!
What is there more to wish? Fortune can find
No flaw in such a glut of happiness,
To let one mis'ry in——O my Varanes!
Thou that of late didst seem to walk on clouds,
Now give a loose, let go the slacken'd reins,
Let us drive down the precipice of joy,
As if that all the winds of heaven were for us.

Var. My Lord, I'm glad to find the gale is turn'd;
And give you joy of this auspicious fortune.
Plough on your way with all your streamers out;
With all your glorious flags and streamers ride
Triumphant on——And leave me to the waves,
The sands, the winds, the rocks, the sure destruction,
And ready gulfs that gape to swallow me.

Theo. It was thy hand that drew me from the grave,
Who had been dead by this time to ambition,
To crowns, to titles, and my slighted greatness.

But still, as if each work of thine deserv'd
The smile of Heav'n——thy Theodosius met
With something dearer than his diadem.
With all that's worth a with, that's worth a life;
I met with that which made me leave the world.

Var. And I, O turn of Chance! O cursed Fortune!
Have lost at once all that could make me happy.
O ye too partial pow'rs!——But now no more:
The gods, my dear, my most-lov'd Theodosius,
Double all those joys that thou hast met upon thee!
For sure thou art most worthy, worthy more
Than Jove in all his prodigality
Can ere bestow in blessings on mankind!
And, oh, methinks my soul is strangely mov'd,
Takes it the more unkindly of her stars,
That thou and I cannot be blest together:
For I must leave thee, friend! this night must leave
thee,

To go in doubtful search of what perhaps
I ne'er shall find, if so my cruel fate
Has order'd it: why then farewell for ever;
For I shall never, never see thee more.

Theo. How sensible my tender soul is grown
Of what you utter! O my gallant friend!
O brother! O Varanes! do not judge
By what I speak, for sighs will interrupt me;
Judge by my tears, judge by these strict embraces,
And by my last resolve: though I have met
With what in silence I so long ador'd;
Though, in the rapture of protesting joys,
I had set down to-morrow for my nuptials,
And Atticus to-night prepares the temple,
Yet, my Varanes, I will rob my soul
Of all her health, of my imperial bride,
And wander with thee in the search of that
On which thy life depends——

Var. If this I suffer,
Conclude me then begotten of a hind,
And bred in wilds: No, Theodosius, no;

I charge thee by our friendship, and conjure thee
 By all the gods, to mention this no more :
 Perhaps, dear friend, I shall be sooner here
 Than you expect, or I myself imagine :
 What most I grieve is, that I cannot wait
 To see your nuptials ; yet my soul is with you,
 And all my adorations to your bride.

Theo. What, my Varanes ! will you be so cruel
 As not to see my bride before you go ?
 Or are you angry at your rival's charms,
 Who has already ravish'd half my heart,
 That once was all your own ?

Var. You know I am disorder'd !
 My melancholy will not suit her blest condition.

[*Exit Theodosius.*]

And the gods know, since thou, my Athenais,
 Art fled from these sick eyes, all other women
 To my pall'd soul seem like the ghost of Beauty,
 And haunt my mem'ry with the loss of thee.

Enter ATHENAIS, THEODOSIUS *leading her.*

Theo. Behold, my Lord, th' occasion of my joy !

Var. O ye immortal gods ! Arantes ! Oh !
 Look there, and wonder ! Ha ! is't possible ?

Athe. My Lord, the Emp'rour says, you are his
 friend ;

He charges me to use my interest,
 And beg of you to stay, at least so long
 As our espousals will be solemnizing.
 I told him I was honour'd once to know you,
 But that so slightly, as I could not warrant
 The grant of any thing that I should ask you——

Var. O heaven and earth ! O Athenais ! why,
 Why dost thou use me thus ? Had I the world,
 Thou know'st it should be thine——

Athe. I know not that——

But yet, to make sure work, one half of it
 Is mine, already, Sir, without your giving.
 My Lord, the Prince is obstinate ; his glory

Act III. The FORCE of LOVE. 49

Scorns to be mov'd by the weak breath of woman :
He is all hero, bent for higher game.

Therefore, 'tis noble, Sir, to let him go :

If not for him, my Lord, yet for myself,

I must intreat the favour to retire. [*Exit Athe. &c.*]

Var. Death and despair, confusion, hell and furies!

Theo. Heav'n guard thy health, and still preserve thy
virtue!

What should this mean? I fear the consequence ;

For 'tis too plain they know each other well.

Var. Undone ! Arantes ! Lost, undone for ever.

I see my doom ; I read it with broad eyes,

As plain as if I saw the book of Fate :

Yet I will muster all my spirits up,

Digest my griefs, swallow the rising passions.

Yes, I will stand the shock of all the gods

Well as I can, and struggle for my life.

Theo. You muse, my Lord ; and, if you'll give me
leave

To judge your thoughts, they seem employ'd at present
About my bride : I guess you know her too.

Var. His bride ! O gods, give me a moment's patience.

I must confess the sight of Athenais,

Where I so little did expect to see her,

So grac'd and so adorn'd, did raise my wonder :

But what exceeds all admiration, is,

That you should talk of making her your bride !

'Tis such a blind effect of monstrous fortune,

That tho' I well remember you affirm'd it,

I cannot yet believe——

Theo. Then now believe me :

By all the Pow'rs Divine, I will espouse her.

Var. Ha ! I shall leap the bounds. Come, come, my
Lord ;

By all those Pow'rs you nam'd, I say you must not !

Theo. I say, I will ; and who shall bar my pleasure ?

Yet more, I speak the judgment of my soul.

Weigh but with fortune merit in the balance,

And Athenais loses by the marriage.

Var. Relentless Fates ! malicious cruel Pow'rs !

50 THEODOSIUS: or, ACT III.

O, for what crime do you thus rack your creature?
 Sir, I must tell you, this unkindly meanness
 Suits the profession of an anchorite well;
 But in an oriental emperor
 It gives offence; nor can you without scandal,
 Without the notion of a grov'ling spirit,
 Espouse the daughter of old Leontine,
 Whose utmost glory is t' have been my tutor.

Theo. He has so well acquitted that employment,
 Breeding you up to such a gallant height
 Of full perfection, and imperial greatness,
 That ev'n for this respect, if for no other,
 I will esteem him worthy while I live.

Var. My Lord, you'll pardon me a little freedom;
 For I must boldly urge in such a cause,
 Who overflatters you, tho' ne'er so near
 Related to your blood, should be suspected.

Theo. If friendship would admit a cold suspicion
 After what I have heard and seen to-day,
 Of all mankind I should suspect Varanes.

Var. He has stung me to the heart; my groans will
 choak me

Unless my struggling passion gets a vent.
 Out with it then—I can no more dissemble—
 Yes, yes, my Lord: since you reduce me to
 The last necessity, I must confess it;
 I must avow my flame for Athenais.
 I am all fire, my passion eats me up,
 It grows incorp'rate with my flesh and blood:
 My pangs redouble; now they cleave my heart!
 O Athenais! O Eudofia!—— Oh——
 Tho' plain as day I see my own destruction,
 Yet to my death, and oh, let all the gods
 Bear witness! still I swear I will adore thee.

Theo. Alas, Varanes, which of us two the Heav'ns
 Have mark'd for death, is yet above the stars;
 But while we live, let us preserve our friendship
 Sacred and just, as we have ever done.

This only mean in two such hard extremes
 Remains for both: to-morrow you shall see her,

ACT III. The FORCE of LOVE. 31

With all advantage, in her own apartment ;
Take your own time, say all you can to gain her ;
If you can win her, lead her into Persia ;
If not, consent that I espouse her here.

Var. Still worse and worse : O Theodosius, oh !
I cannot speak for sighs : my death is seal'd
By this last sweetness : had you been less good,
I might have hop'd ; but now my doom's at hand.
Go then, and take her, take her to the temple :
The gods too give you joy. O Athenais !
Why does thy image mock my foolish sorrow ?
O Theodosius, do not see my tears :
Away, and leave me ; leave me to the grave.

Theo. Farewell : let's leave the issue to the Heav'ns.
I will prepare your way with all that honour
Can urge in your behalf, tho' to my ruin. [*Exit Theo.*]

Var. O, I could tear my limbs, and eat my flesh !
Fool that I was, fond, proud, vain glorious fool !
Damn'd be all courts, and treble damn'd ambition !
Blasted be thy remembrance ! Curses on thee !
And plagues on plagues fall on those fools that seek
thee !

Aran. Have comfort, Sir ———

Var. Away, and leave me, villain !
Traitor, who wrought me first to my destruction ! —
Yet stay, and help, help me to curse my pride,
Help me to wish that I had ne'er been royal ;
That I had never heard the name of Cyrus ;
That my first brawl in court had been my last !
O, that I had been born some happy swain,
And never known a life so great, so vain !
Where I extremes might not be forc'd to choose,
And, bless'd with some mean wife, no crown could lose :
Where the dear partner of my little state,
With all her smiling offspring, at the gate,
Blessing my labours, might my coming wait :
Where in our humble beds all safe might ly,
And not in curst courts for glory die. — [*Exeunt.*]

SONG.

I.

*Hail to the myrtle shade,
 All hail to the nymphs of the fields!
 Kings would not here invade
 Those pleasures that Virtue yields.*

*Chor. Beauty here opens her arms,
 To soften the languishing mind;
 And Phyllis unlocks her charms,
 Ah Phyllis! oh why so kind?*

II.

*Phyllis, thou soul of love,
 Thou joy of the neighbouring swains;
 Phyllis that crowns the grove,
 And Phyllis that gilds the plains;*

*Chor. Phyllis, that ne'er had the skill
 To paint, to patch, and be fine;
 Yet Phyllis, whose eyes can kill,
 I hom Nature hath made divine.*

III.

*Phyllis, whose charming song
 Makes labour and pains a delight;
 Phyllis, that makes the day young,
 And shortens the live-long night;*

*Chor. Phyllis, whose lips like May,
 Still laugh at the sweets they bring;
 Where Love ne'er knows decay,
 But sets with eternal spring.*

ACT IV. SCENE I.

Enter MARCIAN and LUCIUS at a distance.

MARCIAN.

THE gen'ral of the oriental armies,
 Was a commission large as Fate could give.
 'Tis gone. Why, what care I? O Fortune, Fortune!
 Thou laughing empress of this busy world,
 Marcian defies thee now ———
 Why, what a thing is a discarded favourite?
 He who but now, tho' longing to retire,
 Cou'd not for busy waiters be alone,
 Throng'd in his chamber, haunted to his closet,
 With a full croud, and an eternal court;
 When once the favour of his Prince is turn'd,
 Shunn'd as a ghost, the clouded man appears,
 And all the gaudy worshippers forsake him.
 So fares it now with me: where-e'er I come,
 As if I were another Cataline,
 The courtiers rise, and no man will sit near me:
 As if the plague were on me, all men fly me.
 O Lucius, Lucius! if thou leav'st me too,
 I think, I think I could not bear it;
 But like a slave, my spirit, broke with suff'ring,
 Should on these coward knees fall down, and beg
 Once to be great again. ———

Luc. Forbid it, Heav'n!
 That e'er the noble Marcian condescend
 To ask of any but th' immortal gods!
 Nay, I avow, if yet your spirit dare,
 Spite of the court, you shall be great as Cæsar.

Mar. No, Lucius, no; the gods repel that humour:
 Yet since we are alone, and must ere long
 Leave this bad court; let us, like veterans,
 Speak out—Thou sayst, alas, as great as Cæsar!

But where's his greatness? where is his ambition?
 If any sparks of virtue yet remain
 In this poor figure of the Roman glory;
 I say, if any be, how dim they shine,
 Compar'd with what his great forefathers were!
 How should he lighten then, or awe the world,
 Whose soul in courts is but a lambent fire;
 And scarce, O Rome, a glow-worm in the field!
 Soft, young, religious! godlike qualities
 For one that should recover the lost empire,
 And wade through seas of blood, and walk o'er moun-
 tains

Of slaughter'd bodies, to immortal honour!

Luc. Poor heart! he pin'd a while ago for love.

Mar. And for his mistress vow'd to leave the world;
 But some new chance, it seems, has chang'd his mind.
 A marriage! but to whom, or whence she came,
 None knows; but yet a marriage is proclaim'd;
 Pageants prepar'd; the arches are adorn'd;
 The statues crown'd; the Hippodrome does groan
 Beneath the burden of the mounted warriors;
 The theatre is open'd too, where he
 And the hot Persian mean to act their follies.
 Gods, gods! is this the image of our Cæsars?
 Is this the image of our Romulus?
 O, why so poorly have you stamp't Rome's glory?
 Not Rome's but yours! Is this man fit to bear it?
 This waxen portraiture of majesty!
 Which ev'ry warmer passion does melt down,
 And makes him fonder than a woman's longing!

Luc. Thus much I know, to the eternal shame
 Of the imperial blood; this upstart Empress,
 This fine new Queen, is sprung from abject parents;
 Nay, basely born: but that's all one to him;
 He likes and loves, and therefore marries her.

Mar. Shall I not speak? shall I not tell him of it?
 I feel this big-swoln throbbing Roman spirit
 Will burst, unless I utter what I ought.

Enter PULCHERIA with a paper in her hand, and JULIA.

Mar. Pulcheria here! Why, she's the scourge of Marcian:

I tremble too whenever she approaches;
And my heart dances an unusual measure:
Spight of myself, I blush, and cannot stir,
While she is here.—What, Lucius, can this mean?
'Tis said Calphurnia had the heart of Cæsar;
Augustus deated on the subtle Livia:
Why then should I not worship that fair anger?
Oh, didst thou mark her, when her fury lighten'd?
She seem'd all goddesses; nay, her frowns became her:
There was a beauty in her very wildness.
Were I a man born great as our first founder,
Sprung from the Blood Divine—but I am cast,
Beyond all possibility of hope——

Pul. Come hither, Marcian; read this paper o'er,
And mark the strange neglect of Theodosius:
He signs whate'er I bring. Perhaps, you've heard
To-morrow he intends to wed a maid of Athens,
New-made a Christian, and new-nam'd Eudofia;
Whom he more dearly prizes than his empire:
Yet in this paper he hath set his hand,
And seal'd it too with the imperial signet,
That she should lose her head to-morrow morning.

Mar. 'Tis not for me to judge; yet this seems strange.

Pul. I know he rather would commit a murder
On his own person, than permit a vein
Of her to bleed; yet, Marcian, what might follow,
If I were envious of this virgin's honour,
By his rash passing whatsoe'er I offer——
Without a view. Ha! but I had forgot:
Julia, let's haste from this infectious person——
I had forgot that Marcian was a traitor:
Yet, by the Pow'rs Divine, I swear 'tis pity,
That one so form'd by Nature for all honour,
All titles, greatness, dignities imperial,

The noblest person, and the bravest courage,
Should not be honest: Julia, is't not pity?
O Marcian, Marcian! I could weep to think
Virtue should lose itself as thine has done.
Repent, rash man, if yet 'tis not too late,
And mend thy errors; so farewell for ever.

[*Exeunt* Pul. Jul.

Mar. Farewell for ever! No, Madam, ere I go,
I am resolv'd to speak, and you shall hear me;
Then, if you please, take off this traitor's head:
End my commission and my life together.

Luc. Perhaps you'll laugh at what I'm going to say;
But by my life, my Lord, I think 'tis true:
Pulcheria loves this traitor. Did you mark her?
At first she had forgot your banishment;
Makes you her counsellor, and tells her secrets,
As to a friend; nay, leaves them in your hand,
And says, 'tis pity that you are not honest!
With such description of your gallantry,
As none but love could make; then, taking leave,
Thro' the dark lashes of her darting eyes,
Methought she shot her soul at ev'ry glance;
Still looking back, as if she had a mind
That you should know she left her heart behind her.

Mar. Alas! thou dost not know her, nor do I:
Nor can the wit of all mankind conceive her.
But let's away. This paper is of use.

Luc. I guess your purpose:
He is a boy, and as a boy you'll use him:
There is no other way.

Mar. Yes, if he be not
Quite dead with sleep, for ever lost to honour,
Marcian with this shall rouse him. O my Lucius!
Methinks the ghosts of the great Theodosius,
And thund'ring Constantine, appear before me:
They charge me as a soldier to chastise him;
To lash him with keen words from lazy love,
And slew him how they trod the paths of honour.

[*Exeunt.*

S C E N E II.

THEODOSIUS *lying on a couch, with two Boys dress'd like Cupids, singing to him as he sleeps.*

S O N G.

*Happy day, ah happy day,
That Cæsar's beams did first display !
So peaceful was the happy day.
The gods themselves did all look down,
The royal infant's birth to crown,
So pleas'd, they scarce did on the guilty frown.*

*Happy day, ah happy day !
And, oh, thrice happy hour,
That made such goodness master of such pow'r.
For thus the gods declare to men,
No day like this shall ever come agen.*

Enter MARCIAN with an order.

Theo. Ha ! what rash thing art thou, who sett'st so small

A value on thy life, thus to presume
Against the fatal orders I have giv'n,
Thus to entrench on Cæsar's solitude,
And urge me to thy ruin ?

Mar. Mighty Cæsar,
I have transgress'd, and for my pardon bow
To thee, as to the gods, when I offend :
Nor can I doubt your mercy, when you know
The nature of my crime. I am commission'd
From all the earth to give thee thanks and praises,
Thou darling of mankind ! whose conqu'ring arms
Already drown the glory of great Julius ;
Whose deeper reach in laws and policy
Makes wise Augustus envy thee in heav'n !
What mean the Fates by such prodigious virtue ?
When scarce the manly down yet shades thy face,

With conquests thus to over-run the world,
 And make barbarians tremble. O ye gods!
 Should Destiny now end thee in the bloom,
 Methinks I see thee mourn'd above the loss
 Of lov'd Germanicus; thy funerals,
 Like his, are solemniz'd with tears and blood.

Theo. How, Marcian!

Mar. Yes, the raging multitude,
 Like torrents, set no bound to their mad grief;
 Shave their wives' heads, and tear off their own hair;
 With wild despair they bring their infants out,
 To brawl their parents' sorrow in the streets.
 Trade is no more, all courts of justice stop;
 With stones they dash the windows of their temples,
 Pull down their altars; break their household gods;
 And still the universal groan is this,
 'Constantinople's lost, our empire's ruin'd;
 Since he is gone, that father of his country,
 Since he is dead, O life, where is thy pleasure?
 O Rome, O conquer'd world, where is thy glory?'

Theo. I know thee well, thy custom and thy manners,
 Thou dost upbraid me: but no more of this,
 Not for thy life——

Mar. What's life without my honour?
 Could you transform yourself into a Gorgon,
 Or make that beardless face like Jupiter's,
 I would be heard in spite of all your thunder:
 O pow'r of guilt! you fear to stand the test
 Which Virtue brings; like sores, your vices shake
 Before this Roman healer. But, by the gods,
 Before I go, I'll rip the malady,
 And let the venom flow before your eyes.
 This is a debt to the great Theodosius,
 The grandfather of your illustrious blood:
 And then farewell for ever.

Theo. Presuming Marcian!
 What canst thou urge against my innocence?
 Thro' the whole course of all my harmless youth,
 Ev'n to this hour, I cannot call to mind
 One wicked act which I have done to shame me.

Mar. This may be true : yet if you give the sway
To other hands, and your poor subjects suffer,
Your negligence to them is as the cause.
O Theodosius, credit me, who know
The world, and hear how soldiers censure kings;
In aftertimes, if thus you should go on,
Your memory by warriors will be scorn'd,
As much as Nero or Caligula loath'd;
They will despise your sloth, and backward ease,
More than they hate the others' cruelty.
And what a thing, ye gods, is scorn, or pity!
Heap on me, Heav'n, the hate of all mankind;
Load me with malice, envy, detestation,
Let me be horrid to all apprehension,
And the world shun me, so I escape but scorn.

Theo. Pr'ythee, no more.

Mar. Nay, when the legions make comparisons;
And say, Thus cruel Nero once resolv'd,
On Galba's insurrection, for revenge,
To give all France as plunder to the army;
To poison the whole senate at a feast;
To burn the city, turn the wild beasts out,
Bears, lions, tigers, on the multitude;
That so obstructing those that quench'd the fire,
He might at once destroy rebellious Rome——

Theo. O cruelty! Why tell'st thou me of this?
Am I of such a barb'rous bloody temper?

Mar. Yet some will say, This shew'd he had a spirit,
However fierce, avenging, and pernicious,
That favour'd of a Roman: but for you,
What can your partial sycophants invent,
To make you room among the emperors?
Whose utmost is the smallest part of Nero;
A pretty player, one that can act a hero,
And never be one. O y' immortal gods,
Is this the old Cæsarian Majesty?
Now, in the name of our great Romulus,
Why sing you not, and fiddle too, as he did?
Why have you not, like Nero, a Phonnascus?

One to take care of your celestial voice?
 Lie on your back, my Lord; and on your stomach
 Lay a thin plate of lead; abstain from fruits;
 And when the business of the stage is done,
 Retire with your loose friends to costly banquets,
 While the lean army groans upon the ground.

Theo. Leave me, I say, lest I chastise thee: hence!
 Be gone, I say——

Mar. Not till you've heard me out.——
 Build too, like him, a palace lin'd with gold,
 As long and large as that of th' Esquiline:
 Enclose a pool too in it, like the sea;
 And at the empire's cost let navies meet:
 Adorn your starry chambers too with gems;
 Contrive the platted ceilings to turn round,
 With pipes to cast ambrosian oils upon you:
 Consume, with his prodigious vanity,
 In mere perfumes, and od'rous distillations,
 Of sesterces at once four hundred millions:
 Let naked virgins wait you at your table,
 And wanton Cupids dance, and clap their wings.
 No matter what becomes of the poor soldiers,
 So they perform the drudg'ry they are fit for!
 Why, let them starve for want of their arrears,
 Drop as they go, and ly like dogs in ditches.

Theo. Come, you're a traitor!

Mar. Go to, you're a boy!

Or by the gods——

Theo. If arrogance like this,
 And to the Emp'ror's face, should 'scape unpunish'd,
 I'll write myself a coward. Die then, villain,
 A death too glorious for so bad a man,
 By Theodosius' hand.

[*Marcian disarms him, but is wounded.*]

Mar. Now, Sir, where are you?

What, in the name of all our Roman spirits,
 Now charms my hand from giving thee thy fate?
 Has he not cut me off from all my honours?
 Torn my commissions, sham'd me to the earth,

Banish'd the court, a vagabond for ever?
Does not the soldiers hourly ask it from me?
Sigh their own wrongs, and beg me to revenge 'em?
What hinders now, but that I mount the throne,
And make, besides, this purple youth my footstool?
The armies court me: and my country's cause,
The injuries of Rome and Greece persuade me.
Shew but this Roman blood which he has drawn,
They'll make me emp'rour whether I will or no:
Did not, for less than this, the latter Brutus,
Because he thought Rome wrong'd, in person head
Against his friend a black conspiracy,
And stab the Majesty of all the world?

Theo. Act as you please: I am within your pow'r.

Mar. Did not the former Brutus, for the crime
Of Sextus, drive old Tarquin from his kingdom?
And shall this Prince too, by permitting others
To act their wicked wills, and lawless pleasures,
Ravish from the empire its dear health,
Wellbeing, happiness, and ancient glory?
Go on in this dishonourable rest?
Shall he, I say, dream on, while the starv'd troops
Lye cold and waking in the winter camp;
And, like pin'd birds, for want of sustenance,
Feed on the haws and berries of the fields?
O temper, temper me, ye gracious gods;
Give to my hand forbearance, to my heart
Its constant loyalty! I would but shake him,
Rouse him a little from this death of honour,
And shew him what he should be.

Theo. You accuse me,
As if I were some monster most unheard of!
First, as the ruin of the army; then,
Of taking your commission: but, by Heav'n,
I swear, O Marcian! this I never did,
Nor ne'er intended it: nor say I this
To alter thy stern usage; for with what
Thou'st said, and done, and brought to my remem-
brance,

I grow already weary of my life,

62 THEODOSIUS: or, Act IV.

Mar. My Lord, I take your word: you do not know
The wounds which rage within your country's bowels;
The horrid usage of the suffering soldier:
But why will not our Theodosius know?
If you entrust the government to others,
That act these crimes, who but yourself's to blame?
Be witness, O ye gods! of my plain dealing,
Of Marcian's honesty, how'er degraded.
I thank you for my banishment: but, alas!
My loss is little to what soon will follow:
Reflect but on yourself, and your own joys;
Let not this lethargy for ever hold you.
'Twas rumour'd thro' the city, that you lov'd;
That your espousals should be solemniz'd;
When on a sudden here you send your orders
That this bright favourite, the lov'd Eudisia,
Should lose her head.

Theo. Oh, heav'n and earth! what say'st thou?
That I have seal'd the death of my Eudisia!

Mar. 'Tis your own hand and signet: yet I swear,
Tho' you have giv'n to female hands your sway,
And therefore I, as well as the whole army,
For ever ought to curse all womankind;
Yet when the virgin came, as she was doom'd,
And on the scaffold, for that purpose rais'd
Without the walls, appear'd before the army——

Theo. What! on a scaffold! Ha! before the army!

Mar. How quickly was the tide of fury turn'd
To soft compassion, and relenting tears?
But when the axe

Sever'd the brightest beauty of the earth
From that fair body, had you heard the groan,
Which, like a peal of distant thunder, ran
Through all the armed host, you would have thought,
By the immediate darkness that fell round us,
Whole Nature was concern'd at such a suffering,
And all the gods were angry.

Theo. O Pulcheria!
Cruel ambitious sister! this must be

Act IV. The FORCE of LOVE. 63

Thy doing. Oh, support me, noble Marcian!
 Now, now's the time, if thou dar'st strike: behold,
 I offer thee my breast; with my last breath,
 I'll thank thee too, if now thou draw'st my blood.
 Were I to live, thy counsel shall direct me;
 But 'tis too late—— [He swoons]

Mar. He faints! What, ho, there! Lucius!

Enter LUCIUS.

My Lord the Emperor! Eudofia lives;
 She's here, or will be in a minute, moment!
 Quick as the thought, she calls you to the temple.
 Oh, Lucius, help!—I've gone too far; but see,
 He breathes again.—Eudofia has awak'd him.

Theo. Did you not name Eudofia?

Mar. Yes, she lives:

I did but feign the story of her death,
 To find how near you plac'd her to your heart:
 And may the gods rain all their plagues upon me,
 If ever I rebuke you thus again!
 Yet 'tis most certain that you sign'd her death,
 Not knowing what the wife Pulcheria offer'd,
 Who left it in my hand to startle you:
 But by my life and fame, I did not think
 It would have touch'd your life. O pardon me,
 Dear Prince, my Lord, my Empror, royal master!
 Droop not because I utter'd some rash words,
 And was a madman.—By th' immortal gods!
 I love you as my soul: whatever I said,
 My thoughts were otherwise; believe these tears,
 Which do not use to flow: all shall be well.
 I swear that there are seeds in that sweet temper,
 To atone for all the crimes in this bad age.

Theo. I thank thee first for my Eudofia's life.
 What, but my love, could have call'd back that life
 Which thou hast made me hare? But, oh, methought,
 'Twas hard, dear Marcian, very hard, from thee,
 From him I ever rev'renc'd as my father,
 To hear so harsh a message!—But, no more;
 We're friends: thy hand. Nay, if thou wilt not rise,

And let me fold my arms about thy neck,
 I'll not believe thy love : in this forgive me.
 First let me wed Eudofia, and we'll out ;
 We will, my General, and make amends
 For all that's past : Glory and Arms, ye call,
 And Marcian leads me on !——

Mar. Let her not rest then ;
 Espouse her straight : I'll strike you at a heat.
 May this great humour get large growth within you ;
 And be encourag'd by the embold'ning gods !
 O what a sight will this be to the soldier,
 To see me bring you dress'd in shining armour,
 To head the shouting squadrons !——O ye gods !
 Methinks I hear the echoing cries of joy,
 The sounds of trumpets, and the beat of drums.
 I see each starving soldier bound from earth,
 As if a god by miracle had rais'd him ;
 And, with beholding you, grow fat again !
 Nothing but gazing eyes, and op'ning mouths,
 Cheeks red with joy, and lifted hands about you ;
 Some wiping the glad tears that trickle down
 With broken Io's, and with sobbing raptures,
 Crying, To arms ; he's come ; our Emp'ror's come
 To win the world ! Why, is not this far better
 Than lolling in a lady's lap, and sleeping,
 Fasting, or praying ? Come, come, you shall be merry :
 And for Eudofia, she is yours already :
 Marcian has said it, Sir ; she shall be yours.

Theo. Oh, Marcian ! Oh my brother, father, all !
 Thou best of friends ! most faithful counsellor !
 I'll find a match for thee too, ere I rest,
 To make thee love me. For when thou art with me,
 I'm strong and well ; but when thou'rt gone, I'm no-
 thing.

Enter ATHENAIS, meeting THEODOSIUS.

Theo. Alas, Eudofia, tell me what to say ;
 For my full heart can scarce bring forth a word
 Of that which I have sworn to see perform'd.

ACT IV. The FORCE of LOVE. 65

Athe. I'm perfectly obedient to your pleasure.

Theo. Well, then, I come to tell thee, that Varanes
Of all mankind is nearest to my heart.

I love him, dear Eudofia ; and to prove
That love on trial, all my blood's too little ;
Ev'n thee, if I were sure to die this moment,
(As Heav'n alone can tell how far my fate
Is off) O thou, my soul's most tender joy,
With my last breath I would bequeath him thee.

Athe. Then you are pleas'd, my Lord, to yield me
to him.

Theo. No; my Eudofia ; no, I will not yield thee,
While I have life ; for worlds I will not yield thee ;
Yet, thus far I'm engag'd to let thee know,
He loves thee, Athenais, more than ever ;
He languishes, despairs, and dies like me :
And I have pass'd my word, that he shall see thee.

Athe. Ah, Sir, what have you done against yourself,
And me ? why have you pass'd your fatal word ?
Why will you trust me, who am now afraid
To trust myself ? why do you leave me naked
To an assault, who had made proof my virtue,
With this sure guard, never to see him more.
For, oh ! with trembling agonies I speak it,
I cannot see a prince, whom once I lov'd,
Bath'd in his grief, and gasping at my feet,
In all the violent trances of despair,
Without a sorrow that perhaps may end me.

Theo. O ye severer pow'rs ! too cruel fate !
Did ever love tread such a maze before ?
Yet, Athenais, still I trust thy virtue ;
But if thy bleeding heart cannot refrain,
Give, give thyself away ; yet still remember,
That moment Theodosius is no more ——

[Exit Theo. with Atti. Pul. Leon.]

Athe. Now, Glory ! now, if ever thou did'st work
In woman's mind, assist me —— Oh, my heart !
Why dost thou throb, as if thou wert a breaking ?
Down, down, I say ; think on thy injuries,

Thy wrongs, thy wrongs ! 'Tis well : my eyes are dry,
And all within my bosom now is still.

Enter VARANES leaning on ARANTHES.

Ha ! is this he ? or is it Varanes' ghost ?
He looks as if he had bespoke his grave,
Trembling and pale ; I must not dare to view him.
For, oh ! I feel his melancholy here,
And fear I shall too soon partake his sickness.

Var. Thus to the angry gods offending mortals,
Made sensible by some severe affliction,
How all their crimes are register'd in heav'n,
In that nice court how no rash word escapes,
But ev'n extravagant thoughts are all set down ;
Thus the poor penitents with fear approach
The rev'rend shrines, and thus for mercy bow : [*Kneels.*
'Thus melting too, they wash the hallow'd earth,
And groan to be forgiven——

Oh Empress ! Oh Eudofia ! such you're now,
These are your titles, and I must not dare
Ever to call you Athenais more.

Athe. Rise, rise, my Lord ! let me intreat you, rise :
I will not hear you in that humble posture :
Rise, or I must withdraw—The world will blush
For you and me, should it behold a prince
Sprung from immortal Cyrus, on his knees
Before the daughter of a poor philosopher.

Var. 'Tis just, ye righteous gods ! my doom is just ;
Nor will I strive to deprecate her anger.
If possible, I'll aggravate my crimes,
That she may rage till she has broke my heart :
For all I now desire, and let the gods,
'Those cruel gods that join to my undoing,
Be witnesses to this unnatural wish !
Is to fall dead without a wound before her.

Athe. O ye known sounds ! but I must steel my soul.
Methinks these robes, my Delia, are too heavy.

Var. Not worth a word, a look, nor one regard !
Is then the nature of my fault so heinous,
That when I come to take my eternal leave,

ACT IV. The FORCE of LOVE. 67

You'll not vouchsafe to hear me? this is scorn—
Which the fair soul of gentle Athenais
Would ne'er have harbour'd—

Oh! for the sake of him, whom you ere long
Shall hold as fast as now your wishes form him,
Give me a patient hearing; for however
I talk of death, and seem to loath my life,
I would deliberate with my fate a while,
With snatching glances eye thee to the last;
Pause o'er a loss like that of Athenais,
And parly with my ruin.

Athe. Speak, my Lord:

To hear you is the Emperor's command;
And for that cause I readily obey.

Var. The Emperor, the Emperor's command!
And for that cause she readily obeys!
I thank you, Madam, that on any terms
You condescend to hear me—

Know then, Eudokia: Ah, rather let me call thee
By the lov'd name of Athenais still;
That name that I so often have invok'd,
And which was once auspicious to my vows:
So oft at midnight sigh'd amongst the groves,
The river's murmur, and the echo's burden;
Which every bird could sing, and wind did bear!
By that dear name, I make this protestation,
By all that's good on earth, or blest in heav'n,
I swear I love thee more, far more, than ever.
With conscious blushes too, here, help me, gods;
Help me to tell her, tho' to my confusion,
And everlasting shame; yet I must tell her,
I lay the Persian crown before her feet.

Athe. My Lord, I thank you, and t'express those
thanks

As nobly as you offer 'em, I return
The gift you make; nor will I now upbraid you
With the example of the Emperor:
Not but I know 'tis that that draws you on,
Thus to descend beneath your Majesty,

And swell the daughter of a poor philosopher
With hopes of being great.

Var. Ah, Madam! ah! you wrong me! by the gods,
I had repented, ere I knew the Emp'ror——

Athe. You find, perhaps too late, that Athenais,
However slighted for her birth and fortune,
Has something in her person, and her virtue,
Worth the regard of emperors themselves;
And, to return the compliment you gave
My father, Leontine, that poor philosopher,
Whose utmost glory is t'have been your tutor;
I here protest, by virtue, and by glory,
I swear by heav'n, and all the pow'rs divine,
Th' abandon'd daughter of that poor old man
Shall ne'er be seated on the throne of Cyrus.

Var. O death to all my hopes! What hast thou sworn?
To turn me wild? Ah, cursed throne of Cyrus!
Would thou hadst been o'erturn'd, and laid in dust,
His crown too thunder-struck; my father, all
The Persian race, like poor Darius, ruin'd,
Blotted, and swept for ever from the world,
When first ambition blasted thy remembrance——

Athe. O heav'n! I had forgot the base affront.
Offer'd by this proud man; a wrong so great,
It is remov'd beyond all hope of mercy;
He had design'd to bribe my father's virtue,
And by unlawful means——
Fly from my sight, lest I become a fury,
And break those rules of temp'rance I propos'd;
Fly, fly, Varanes! fly this sacred place,
Where virtue and religion are profess'd:
This city will not harbour infidels;
Traitors to chastity, licentious princes:
Be gone, I say, thou canst not here be safe;
Fly to imperial libertines abroad:
In foreign courts thou'lt find a thousand beauties
That will comply for gold: for gold they'll weep,
For gold be fond, as Athenais was,
And charm thee still, as if they lov'd indeed.

ACT IV. The FORCE of LOVE.

69

Thou'lt find enough companions too for riot :
Luxuriant all, and royal as thyself,
Tho' thy lewd vices should rebound to heav'n——
Art thou not gone yet ?

Var. No, I'm charm'd to hear you :
O from my soul I do confess myself
The very blot of honour ; I'm more black
Than thou, in all thy heat of just revenge,
With all thy glorious eloquence, canst make me.

Athe. Away, Varanes !

Var. Yes, Madam, I am going——
Nay, by the gods, I do not ask thee pardon,
Nor, while I live, will I implore thy mercy :
But, when I'm dead, if, as thou dost return
With happy Theodosius from the Temple,
If, as thou go'st in triumph through the streets,
Thou chance to meet the cold Varanes there,
Borne by his friends to his eternal home ;
Stop then, O Athenais ! and behold me :
Say, as thou hang'st about the Emp'ror's neck,
Alas ! my Lord, this sight is worth our pity.
If to those pitying words thou add a tear,
Or if one parting groan——If possible,
If the good gods will grant my soul the freedom,
I'll leave my shroud, and wake from death to thank
thee.

Athe. He shakes my resolution from the bottom :
My bleeding heart too speaks in his behalf,
And says my virtue has been too severe.

Var. Farewell ! O Empress : no Athenais now :
I will not call thee by that tender name,
Since cold despair begins to freeze my bosom,
And all my pow'rs are now resolved on death.
'Tis said that from my youth I have been rash,
Chol'ric, and hot ; but let the gods now judge
By my last wish, if ever patient man
Did calmly bear so great a loss as mine :
Since 'tis so doom'd by fate, you must be wedded ;
For your own peace, when I am laid in earth,
Forget that e'er Varanes had a being :

70 THEODOSIUS: or, Act IV.

Turn all your soul to Theodosius' bosom,
Continue, gods, their days, and make 'em long !
Lucina wait upon their fruitful Hymen !
And many children, beauteous as the mother,
And pious as the father, make 'em smile !

Athe. O Heav'ns !

Var. Farewell — I'll trouble you no more :
The malady, that lodg'd within, grows stronger :
I feel the shock of my approaching fate ;
My heart too trembles at his distant march ;
Nor can I utter more, if you should ask me.
Thy arm, Arantes ! O farewell for ever —

Athe. Varanes, stay ; and, ere you go for ever,
Let me unfold my heart.

Var. O Athenais !

What further cruelty hast thou in store
To add to what I suffer ?

Athe. Since 'tis doom'd

That we must part, let's part as lovers should,
As those that have lov'd long, and loved well.

Var. Art thou so good ? O Athenais, oh !

Athe. First, from my soul I pity and forgive you ;
I pardon you that hasty little error,
Which yet has been the cause of both our ruins.
And let this sorrow witness for my heart,
How eagerly I wish it had not been ;
And, since I cannot keep it, take it all :
Take all the love, O Prince, I ever bore you :
Or, if 'tis possible, I'll give you more ;
Your noble carriage forces this confession :
I rage, I burn, I bleed, I die for love ;
I am distracted with this world of passion.

Var. Gods ! cruel gods ! take notice I forgive you.

Athe. Alas ! My Lord, my weaker tender sex
Has not your manly patience, cannot curb
This fury in ; therefore I let it loose :
Spite of my rigid duty, I will speak
With all the dearth of a dying lover,
Farewell most lovely, and most lov'd of men !
Why comes this dying paleness o'er thy face ?

ACT V. The FORCE of LOVE. 71

Why wander thus thy eyes? Why dost thou bend,
As if the fatal weight of death were on thee?

Var. Speak yet a little more; for, by the gods!
And as I prize these blessed happy moments,
I swear, O Athenais! all is well;
O never better.

Athe. I doubt thee, dear Varanes;
Yet, if thou dy'st, I shall not long be from thee.
Once more farewell, and take these last embraces.
Oh! I could crush him to my heart! Farewell:
And, as a dying pledge of my last love,
Take this, which all thy pray'rs could never charm.
What have I done? oh lead me, lead me, Delia.
Ah, Prince, farewell! Angels protect and guard thee!

Var. Turn back, O Athenais! and behold me;
Hear my last words, and then farewell for ever.
Thou hast undone me more by this confession:
You say, you swear, you love me more than ever:
Yet I must see you marry'd to another:
Can there be any plague, or hell, like this?
O Athenais! Whither shall I turn me?
You've brought me back to life; but oh! what life?
T' a life more terrible than thousand deaths.

Like one that had been buried in a trance,
With racking starts, he wakes, and gazes round,
Forc'd by despair his whirling limbs to wound,
And bellow like a spirit under-ground;
Still urg'd by fate, to turn, to toss, and rave,
Tormented, dash'd, and broken in the grave. [*Exeunt.*]

ACT V. SCENE I.

ATHENAISS *dress'd in imperial robes, and crown'd:
a table with a bowl of poison.*

ATHENAISS.

A MIDNIGHT marriage! Must I to the temple!
Thus, at the murd'rer's hour? 'Tis wondrous
strange!

But so thou say'st my father has commanded ;
And that's a mighty reason.

Del. The Emp'ror, in compassion to the Prince,
Who would, perhaps, fly to extravagance,
If he in public should resolve t'espouse you,
Contriv'd by this close marriage to decieve him.

Athe. Go, fetch thy lute, and sing those lines I gave thee.

Lo, now I am alone: yet my soul shakes :
For where this dreadful draught may carry me,
The Heav'ns can only tell; yet I'm resolv'd
To drink it off in spite of consequence.
Whisper him, O some angel! what I'm doing;
By sympathy of soul let him too tremble,
To hear my wond'rous faith, my wond'rous love :
Whose spirit not content with an ovation
Of ling'ring fate, with triumph thus resolv'd,
Thus, in the rapid chariot of the soul,
To mount, and dare as never woman dar'd. [*Drinks.*
'Tis done: haste, Delia, haste! come, bring my lute,
And sing my waftage to immortal joys.
Methinks I can't but smile at my own brav'ry,
Thus from my lowest fortune rais'd to empire.
Crown'd, and adorn'd! worship'd by half the earth,
While a young monarch dies for my embraces!
Yet now to wave the glories of the world!
O my Varanes! tho' my birth's unequal,
My virtue sure has richly recompens'd,
And quite outgone example!

S O N G.

I.

*Ab! cruel bloody Fate,
What canst thou now do more?
Alas! 'tis all too late,
Philander to restore:
Why should the heav'nly pow'rs persuade
Poor mortals to believe,
That they guard us here,
And reward us there,
Yet all our joys deceive?*

II.

*Her poniard then she took,
And held it in her hand;
And, with a dying look,
Cry'd, Thus I Fate command;
Philander! ah! my Love, I come,
To meet thy shade below;
Ah! I come, she cry'd,
With a wound so wide,
There needs no second blow.*

III.

*In purple waves her blood
Ran streaming down the floor;
Unmov'd she saw the flood,
And blest'd her dying hour:
Philander! ah, Philander! still
The bleeding Phyllis cry'd:
She wept awhile,
And forc'd a smile;
Then clos'd her eyes, and dy'd.*

Enter PULCHERIA.

Pul. How fares my dear Eudofia? Ha! thou look'st
Or else the tapers cheat my sight, like one
That's fitter for thy tomb, than Cæsar's bed:
A fatal sorrow dims thy shaded eyes;
And, in despite of all thy ornaments,
Thou seem'st to me the ghost of Athenais.

Athe. And what's the punishment, my dear Pul-
cheria,

What torments are allotted those sad spirits,
Who groaning with the burden of despair,
No longer will endure the cares of life;
But boldly set themselves at liberty,
Thro' the dark caves of death to wander on,
Like wilder'd travellers without a guide,
Eternal rovers in the gloomy maze,
Where scarce the twilight of an infant moon,
By a faint glimmer chequ'ring through the trees,
Reflects to dismal view the walking ghosts;
And never hope to reach the blessed fields?

Pul. No more o'that ; Atticus shall resolve thee.
 But see, he waits thee from the Emperor :
 Thy father too attends.

Enter LEONTINE, ATTICUS, &c.

Leon. Come, Athenais ! Ha ! what now, in tears !
 O fall of honour ! But no more ; I charge thee.
 I charge thee, as thou ever hop'st my blessing,
 Or fear'st my curse, to banish from thy soul
 All thoughts, if possible, the memory
 Of that ungrateful prince that has undone thee.
 Attend me to the temple on this instant,
 To make the Emp'ror thine, this night to wed him,
 And ly within his arms.

Athe. Yes, Sir, I'll go——

Let me but dry my eyes, and I will go :
 Eudofia, this unhappy bride, shall go :
 Thus, like a victim, crown'd, and doom'd to bleed,
 I'll wait you to the altar, wed the Emp'ror,
 And, if he pleases, ly within his arms.

Leon. Thou art my child again.

Athe. But do not, Sir, imagine, any charms
 Or threat'nings shall compel me
 Never to think of poor Varanes more :
 No, my Varanes ! No——

While I have breath, I will remember thee :

To thee alone I will my thoughts confine,
 And all my meditations shall be thine :
 The image of thy woes my soul shall fill :
 Fate, and my end, and thy remembrance still.
 As in some poplar shade the nightingale,
 With piercing moans, does her lost young bewail,
 Which the rough hind, observing as they lay
 Warm in their downy nest, had stoll'n away ;
 But she in mournful sounds does still complain,
 Sings all the night, tho' all her songs are vain,
 And still renews her miserable strain :
 So, my Varanes, till my death comes on,
 Shall sad Eudofia thy dear loss bemoan.

[*Exeunt* Athenais, Atticus, &c.]

S C E N E II.

Enter VARANES.

Var. 'Tis night, dead night; and weary nature lyes
So fast, as if she never were to rise:
No breath of wind now whispers through the trees;
No noise at land, nor murmur in the seas:
Lean wolves forget to howl at night's pale noon,
No wakeful dogs bark at the silent moon,
Nor bay the ghosts that glide with horror by,
To view the caverns where their bodies ly:
The ravens perch, and no presages give,
Nor to the windows of the dying cleave:
The owls forget to scream; no midnight sound
Calls drowsy Echo from the hollow ground:
In vaults the walking fires extinguish'd ly;
The stars, Heav'n's centry, wink, and seem to die.
Such universal silence spreads below,
Through the vast shades where I am doom'd to go;
Nor shall I need a violence to wound:
The storm is here, that drives me on the ground:
Sure means to make the soul and body part,
A burning fever, and a broken heart.
What, hoa, Arantes!

Enter ARANTES.

I sent thee to the apartment of Athenais:
I sent thee, did I not? to be admitted.

Aran. You did, my Lord; but oh,
I fear to give you an account.

Var. Alas!

Arantes, I am got on th' other side
Of this bad world; and now am past all fear.
O ye avenging Gods! is there a plague
Among your hoarded bolts, and heaps of vengeance,
Beyond the mighty loss of Athenais?
'Tis contradiction: speak then, speak, Arantes:
For all misfortunes, if compar'd with that,
Will make Varanes smile.

Aran. My Lord, the Empress,
Crown'd, and adorn'd with the imperial robes,

At this dead time of night, with silent pomp,
As they design'd from all to keep it secret,
But chiefly sure from you; I say, the Empress
Is now conducted by the General,

Atticus, and her father, to the temple,
There to espouse the Emp'rour Theodosius.

Var. Say'st thou? Is't certain? Hah!

Aran. Most certain, Sir, I saw 'em in procession.

Var. Give me thy sword. Malicious Fate! O Fortune!
O giddy chance! O turn of love and greatness!
Marry'd! She has kept her promise now indeed;
And oh! her pointed fame, and nice revenge,
Have reach'd their end. No, my Arantes, no!
I will not stay the lazy execution
Of a slow fever: give me thy hand, and swear
By all the love and duty that thou ow'st me,
T' observe the last commands that I shall give thee:
Stir not against my purpose, as thou fear'st
My anger and disdain; nor dare t' oppose me
With troublesome, unnecessary, formal reasons;
For what my thought has doom'd, my hand shall seal:
I charge thee hold it steadfast to my heart,
Fix'd as the fate that throws me on the point.
Though I have liv'd a Persian, I will fall
As fair, as fearless, and as full resolv'd,
As any Greek or Roman of 'em all.

Aran. What you command is terrible, but sacred;
And to atone for this too cruel duty,
My Lord, I'll follow you——

Var. I charge thee, not:

But, when I'm dead, take the attending slaves,
And bear me, with my blood distilling down,
Strait to the temple: lay me, O Arantes!
Lay my cold corse at Athenais' feet,
And say, (oh why, why do my eyes run o'er?)
Say, with my latest gasp I groan'd for pardon.
Just here, my friend, hold fast, and fix the sword:
I feel the art'ry where the life blood lyes;
It heaves against the point——Now, O ye gods,
If for the greatly wretched you have room,
Prepare my place, for dauntless, lo, I come!

*The Force of Love thus makes the mortal wound,
And Athenais sends me to the ground. [Kills himself.]*

S C E N E III.

The outward part of the Temple.

*Enter PULCHERIA and JULIA at one door, MARCIAN
and LUCIUS at another.*

Pul. Look, Julia, see! the pensive Marcian comes;
'Tis to my wish; I must no longer lose him,
Lest he should leave the court indeed: he looks
As if some mighty secret work'd within him,
And labour'd for a vent. Inspire me, woman!
That what my soul desires above the world,
May seem impos'd and forc'd on my affections——

Luc. I say she loves you, and she stays to hear it
From your own mouth: now, in the name of all
The gods at once, my Lord, why are you silent?
Take heed, Sir: mark your opportunity:
For if the woman lays it in your way,
And you o'ersee it, she is lost for ever.

Mar. Madam, I come to take my eternal leave:
Your doom has banish'd me, and I obey:
The court and I shake hands, and now we part,
Never to see each other more: the court
Where I was born, and bred a gentleman;
No more, 'till your illustrious bounty rais'd me,
And drew the earth-born vapour to the clouds:
But, as the gods ordain'd it, I have lost,
I know not how, through ignorance, your grace;
And now the exhalation of my glory
Is quite consum'd, and vanish'd into air.

Pul. Proceed, Sir——

Mar. Yet let those gods that doom'd me to displease you,
Be witnesses how much I honour you!——
Thus, worshipping, I swear by your bright self,
I leave this infamous court with more content
Than fools and flatterers seek it. But, Oh, Heav'n,
I cannot go, if still your hate pursues me:
Yes, I declare it is impossible

To go to banishment without your pardon.

Pul. You have 't, Marcian; is there aught beside
That you would speak? for I am free to hear.

Mar. Since I shall never see you more, what hinders
But my last words should here protest the truth?
Know then, imperial princess, matchless woman!
Since you first cast your eyes upon my meanness,
Ev'n till you rais'd me to my envy'd height,
I have in secret lov'd you——

Pul. Is this Marcian?

Mar. You frown; but I am still prepar'd for all:
I say I lov'd you, and I love you still,
More than my life, and equal to my glory.
Methinks the warring spirit that inspires
This frame, the very genius of old Rome!
That makes me talk without the fear of death,
And drives my daring soul to acts of honour,
Flames in your eyes: our thoughts too are akin,
Ambitious, fierce, and burn alike for glory.
Now, by the gods, I lov'd you in your fury,
In all the thunder that quite riv'd my hopes;
I lov'd you most ev'n when you did destroy me.
Madam, I've spoke my heart, and could say more,
But that I see it grieves you; your high blood
Frets at the arrogance and saucy pride
Of this bold vagabond: may the gods forgive me!
Farewell: a worthier gen'ral may succeed me;
But none more faithful to the Empror's interest
Than him your pleas'd to call the Traitor Marcian.

Pul. Come back: you've subtly play'd your part indeed:
For first, the Empror, whom you lately school'd,
Restores you your commission; next commands you,
As you're a subject, not to leave the court:
Next, but, oh, Heaven! which way shall I express
His cruel pleasure? He that is so mild
In all things else, yet obstinate in this,
Spight of my tears, my birth, and my disdain,
Commands me, as I dread his high displeasure,
O Marcian! to receive you as my husband.

Mar. Ha, Lucius! What, what does my fate intend?

Luc. Pursue her, Sir; 'tis as I said; she yields,

And rages that you follow her no faster.

Pub. Is then at last my great authority,
And my entrusted power, declin'd to this?
Yet, oh my fate ! what way can I avoid it !
He charg'd me strait to wait him to the temple,
And there resolve, O Marcian ! on this marriage.
Now, gen'rous soldier, as you're truly noble,
Oh, help me forth, lost in this labyrinth ;
Help me to loose this more than Gordian knot,
And make me and yourself for ever happy.

Mar. Madam, I'll speak as briefly as I can,
And as a soldier ought : The only way
To help this knot is yet to tie it faster.
Since then the Emp'rour has resolv'd you mine,
For which I will for ever thank the gods,
And make this holiday throughout my life,
I take him at his word, and claim his promise ;
The empire of the world shall not redeem you.
Nay, weep not, Madam : though my outside's rough,
Yet, by those eyes, your soldier has a heart
Compassionate and tender as a virgin's :
Evn now it bleeds to see those falling sorrows ;
Perhaps this grief may move the Emperor
To a repentance : come then to the trial ;
For by my arms, my life, and dearer honour,
If you go back, when giv'n me by the hand,
In distant wars my fate I will deplore,
And Marcian's name shall ne'er be heard of more.

[*Exeunt.*]

S C E N E IV.

The Temple.

THEODOSIUS, ATHENAIS, ATTICUS *joining their hands.*—MARCIAN, PULCHERIA, LUCIUS, JULIA, DELIA, &c. LEONTINE.

Ant. The more than Gordian knot is ty'd,
Which Death's strong arm shall ne'er divide ;
For when to bliss ye wafred are,
Your spirits shall be wedded there :
Waters are lost, and fires will die,
But love alone can Fate defy.

Enter ARANTHES with the body of Varanes.

Aran. Where is the Empress? where shall I find Eudosia?

By fate I'm sent to tell that cruel Beauty
She has robb'd the world of fame; her eyes have giv'n
A blast to the big blossom of the war:
Behold him there nipt in his flow'ry morn,
Compell'd to break his promise of a day,
A day that Conquest would have made her boast:
Behold her laurel wither'd to the root,
Canker'd and kill'd by Athenais' scorn.

Athe. Dead, dead Varanes!

Theo. O y' eternal Pow'rs

That guide the world! why do you shock our reason
With acts like these, that lay our thoughts in dust?
Forgive me, Heav'n, this start; or elevate
Imagination more, and make it nothing.
Alas! alas, Varanes!—But speak, Arantes,
The manner of his fate: groans choke my words:
But speak, and we will answer thee with tears.

Aran. His fever would, no doubt, by this have done
What, some few minutes past, his sword perform'd:
He heard from me your progress to the temple,
How you design'd at midnight to deceive him
By a clandestine marriage: but, my Lord,
Had you beheld his racks at my relation;
Or, had your Empress seen him in those torments,
When, from his dying eyes, swoln to the brim,
The big round drops roll'd down his manly face;
When from his hollow breast a murmur'ing crowd
Of groans rush'd forth, and echo'd, All is well;
Then had you seen him, oh, ye cruel gods!
Rush on the sword I held against his breast,
And dye it to the hilt, with these last words—
Bear me to Athenais—

Athe. Give me way, my Lord.

I have most strictly kept my promise with you:
I am your bride, and you can ask no more;
Or, if you did, I'm past the pow'r to give:

ACT V. THE FORCE OF LOVE. 81

But here ! oh, here ! on his cold bloody breast,
Thus let me breathe my last.

Theo. Oh, Empress, what, what can this transport
mean ?

Are these our nuptials ? these my promis'd joys ?

Athe. Forgive me, Sir ; this last respect I pay
These sad remains—And, O thou mighty spirit !
If yet thou art not mingled with the stars,
Look down and hear the wretched Athenais.
When thou shalt know, before I gave consent
To this indecent marriage, I had taken
Into my veins a cold and deadly draught,
Which soon would render me, alas ! unfit
For the warm joys of an imperial lover,
And make me ever thine, yet keep my word
With Theodosius, wilt thou not forgive me ?

Theo. Poison'd to free thee from the Emperor !
Oh, Athenais, thou hast done a deed
That tears my heart ! What have I done against thee,
That thou shouldst brand me thus with infamy
And everlasting shame ? Thou might'st have made
Thy choice without this cruel act of death :
I left thee to thy will, and, in requital,
Thou'st murder'd all my fame——

Athe. Oh, pardon me !
I lay my dying body at your feet,
And beg, my Lord, with my last sighs entreat you,
T' impute the fault, if 'tis a fault, to love ;
And the ingratitude of Athenais
To her too cruel stars : remember too,
I begg'd you would not let me see the Prince,
Presaging what has happen'd ; yet my word,
As to our nuptials, was inviolable.

Theo. Ha ! she is going ! see her languishing eyes
Draw in their beams ; the sleep of death is on her.

Athe. Farewell, my Lord ! Alas ! alas, Varanes !
T' embrace thee now is not immodesty ;
Or, if it were, I think my bleeding heart
Would make me, criminal in death, to clasp thee,
Break all the tender niceties of honour

To fold thee thus, and warm thee into life :
For, oh ! what man like him could woman move !
Oh, Prince belov'd ! Oh, spirit most divine !
Thus, by my death, I give thee all my love,
And seal my soul and body ever thine—— [Dies.

Theo. O Marcian ! O Pulcheria ! did not the Pow'r
Whom we adore, plant all his thunderbolts
Against self-murd'ers, I would perish too :
But, as I am, I swear to leave the empire :
To thee, my sister, I bequeath the world,
And, yet a gift more great, the gallant Marcian.
On then, my friend ; now shew thy Roman spirit :
As to her sex fair Athenais was,
Be thou to thine a pattern of true honour.

Thus we'll atone for all the present crimes,
That yet it may be said in aftertimes,
No age with such examples could compare,
So great, so good, so virtuous, and so fair !

[*Exeunt omnes.*

EPILOGUE.

THRICE happy they that never writ before !
 How pleas'd and bold they quit the safer shore !
 Like some new captain of the city bands,
 That, with big looks, in Finsbury commands :
 Swell'd with huge ale, he cries, Beat, beat a drum :
 Pox o' the French King ! Udsbud, let him come :
 Give me ten thousand redcoats, and alloo !
 We'll firk his Crequi and his Condé too.
 Thus the young scribblers mankind's sense disdain,
 For ignorance is sure to make them vain :
 But, far from vanity or dang'rous pride,
 Our cautious poet courts you to his side :
 For why should you be scorn'd, to whom are due
 All the good days that ever authors knew ?
 If ever gay, 'tis you that make 'em fine ;
 The pit and boxes make the poet dine,
 And he scarce drinks but of the critics wine.
 Old writers should not for vain-glory strive,
 But, like old mistresses, think how to thrive ;
 Be fond of ev'ry thing their keepers say,
 At least till they can live without a play :
 Like one that knows his trade, and has been bit,
 She doats and fawns upon her wealthy cit,
 And swears she loves him merely for his wit.
 Another, more untaught than a Walloon,
 Antic and ugly, like an old baboon,
 She swears is an accomplish'd Beau-garçon ;
 Turns with all winds, and sails with all desires ;
 All hearts in city, town, and court she fires ;
 Young callow lords, lean knights, and driv'ling squires.
 She in resistless flatt'ry finds her ends,
 Gives thanks for fools, and makes ye all her friends.
 So should wise poets sooth an awkward age ;
 For they are prostitutes upon the stage :
 To stand on points were foolish and ill-bred,
 As for a lady to be nice in bed :
 Your wills alone must their performance measure,
 And you may turn them ev'ry way for pleasure.

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